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The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary

Stephen Graham

ANNEX

THE WAY OF MARTHA

AND

THE WAY OF MARY

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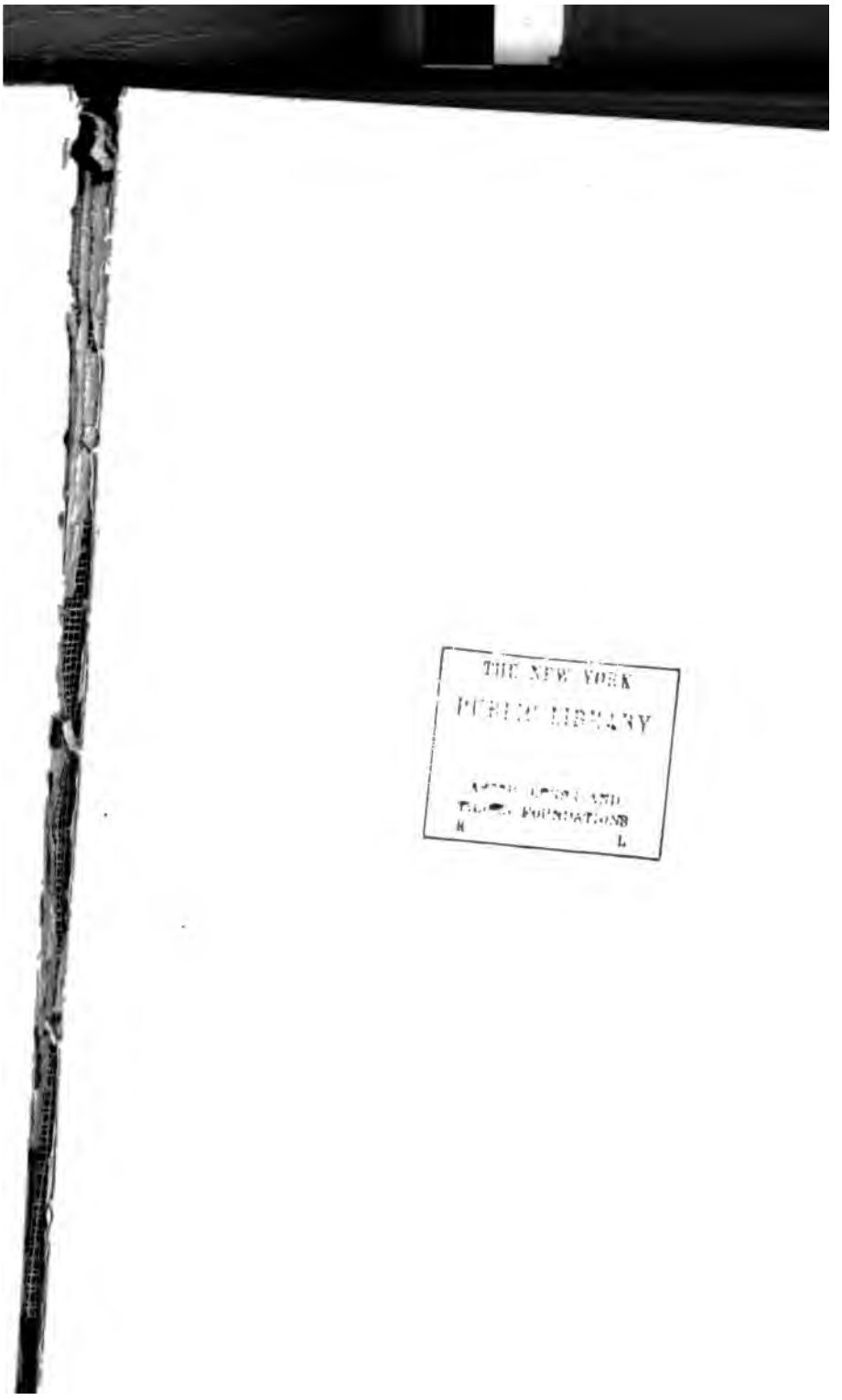

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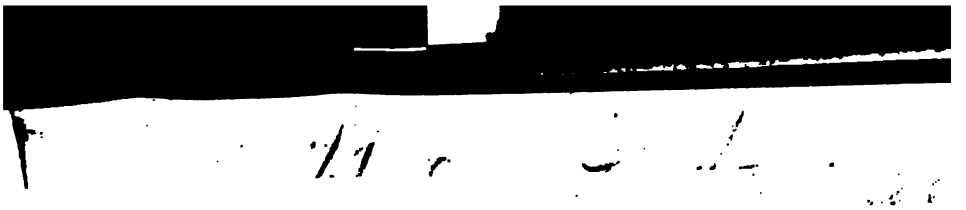

MARTHA

OF MARY

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N COMPANY

THE WAY OF MARTHA

AND

THE WAY OF MARY

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF "RUSSIA AND THE WORLD," "WITH POOR IMMIGRANTS TO AMERICA," "WITH THE RUSSIAN PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM," ETC.

WITH FRONTISPIECE

New York

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1915

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PREFACE

THE quotation "Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about with many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her" is as common in Russia as "faith without works is dead" is common here. Speaking roughly, Eastern Christianity is associated with Mary's good part and Western Christianity with the way of Martha and service. The two aspects seem to be irreconcilable, but they are not; and I have called my book *The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary* because the ways of the sisters are as touchstones for Christianity, and in their reconciliation is a great beauty.

If you would know what a nation is, you must ask what is the religion of the people. Without a national religion a nation is not a nation but a collection of people. It is a truism to say that what is best in a nation springs from its religion, from some central idealism to which every one in the nation has access — the idea of the nation. There is a "British idea," an "American idea," a "German idea," a "Russian idea." This is profoundly true of Russia; for all that

is beautiful in her life, art, and culture springs from the particular and characteristic Christian idea in the depths of her. She is essentially a great and wonderful unity. It is of that essential unity that I write, and in writing hope to show on the one plane Russia, and on another the splendour of the true Christian idea.

This book was written in Russia and in Egypt during 1914 and 1915. In 1913 I was in America and wrote my study of American ideals in contrast to Russian ideals. I returned to Russia in January 1914 eager to look at the East afresh and compare it with the West. In setting out for Russia the fundamental idea in my mind was that of Russia as a religious country where one found refuge from materialism and worldly cares, and I hoped to find stories and pictures of life with which to clothe the beautiful idea of the sanctuary. The book I was going to write I always called in my mind "the sanctuary book," and my notion was to make a book that should also be a sanctuary itself — a book in which the reader could find sacred refuge.

Much has intervened. My quest resolved itself first of all into a seeking for what I call the Russian idea, then into a study of Russian Christianity. My new volume is necessarily one of seeking and finding, a making of discoveries. One chapter led me on to another, and the scope of my study increased till it took in the whole question of what Eastern Christianity is and how it is in contrast to Western Christianity.

Athwart this peaceful work came the typhoon of the Great War, and my hand was claimed by the great new friendship between England and Russia, the friendship of brothers in arms. It was fitting to seize the opportunity to make that friendship wider and deeper by describing and interpreting the Russian people to larger audiences. But I carried the purpose of this book with me, and much of what is written here was first put into words on public platforms in the winter of 1914–15. Finally, as a culmination to this personal work, on the 16th April 1915 I gave a lecture at the Royal Institution on "The Russian Idea," and therein collected together and summarised all that I had said during the winter. That evening I read almost all that is vital in Part I. of this book.

In May in order to carry on this study I went to Egypt to visit the shrines and monasteries of the Desert, some of the sources of inspiration of Eastern Christianity, and to make a journey to Russia the way Christianity came to her. In these journeyings and doings lie the chronological and geographical scheme of this new volume.

I feel that this book, the hardest of all my books to write, is not in any sense a collection or a medley of impressions and stories, but has one and the same object and quest running through the whole of it; and that in order to understand it even in a small way it is necessary to read the whole of it, and perhaps re-read

it. It is an organic unity, and reflects in its form something of the Russian idea and of Sancta Sophia itself.

The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary is an interpretation and a survey of Eastern Christianity, and a consideration of the ideas at present to the fore in Christianity generally.

Christianity is not yet a system: it is chaotic in its tenets and the manner of its profession. This *young* religion of Christianity! Perhaps 6000 years hence it will have crystallised out, but as yet it is in the confused grandeur of youth. It has all possibilities. A young man or young woman of to-day can live by Christianity because it is young with them. Probably any true book on Christianity must reflect this fact. As yet Christianity is running germs: it is in being's flood, in action's storm. It is not all logical, symmetrical, like a thesis demonstrated and proved to a class in moral philosophy.

Christianity is a great live religion still absorbing all that is true in other religions. It is *the word.* It is part of our language, and by means of it we express what is deepest in ourselves. There has not been in history such a powerful medium of self-expression. Words are our means of intercommunication, of understanding one another and telling one another what is in the heart, that is, of communion with one another. That communion is deep and tender, and the knowledge of it, like the knowledge of God, passeth

understanding; all that we know is that love kindles from it. I make this affirmation as one whose special medium is the written and the spoken word.

STEPHEN GRAHAM.

Moscow, September 1915.

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I

THE RUSSIAN IDEA

I

TO RUSSIA

KIEF, *January* 1914.

ALL night long from Paris to Cologne the train speeds like a bird, joyously screaming. I am in the carriage next the engine, and as I lie full length in the darkened empty carriage I look out on snow-patched fields and hills, now partly obscured by wild volumes of vapour, now fierily illumined by the glow of the furnace, the black sky raining showers of red sparks on to the vague night landscape, the engine racing forward past signal-boxes and stations, clattering along the changing points of the rails of junctions, knowing apparently that all signals are *for*, never anticipating any hindrance, skirling and leaping in the exuberance of accomplishment.

We pass the Belgian frontier at three in the morning near Namur, and the German at Herbesthal in the dim glimmering before dawn. The world that becomes visible as the sun rises is the ordered world of the Germans. Everything is prim, everything is as it should be; the fields are symmetrical, the palings are

vertical and in good repair, the manure heaps are com
pact; where houses are being pulled down or set up ther
is no disorder whatever; nothing is scattered about
everything is collected and numbered. At the littl
stations we pass through, the station-master in bril
liant red and blue is standing erect at that point on th
platform that it is his duty to occupy. On the train
woman in uniform has appeared. She has put thirty
or forty little tablets of soap and two dozen hand-towel
into the lavatory; she has picked up the bits of pape
that lay scattered in the corridor all night; she ha
washed everything in the lavatory; put water in th
cistern and boiled water in the carafe. The conductor
a well-groomed military man, has come and allotted u
definitely numbered seats in the carriages and has see
that our respective hand-luggage occupies just th
space in the rack which is above our numbered seats.

At Cologne there is just four minutes to cross
subway and get into the Berlin express. My por
luggage-dragger, as the precise Germans call him, ta
me across at a run and puts me in the train, and my r
tered box of books and papers and what-not is r
lowed to miss the connexion. I hardly sit dowr
speckless third-class carriage of the real Germ
before the whistle goes and we slip past the gr
piles of Cologne Cathedral in the backgrou
day long we tear over Germany at sixty mile
to Berlin.

At Paris I had registered my box to the Charlottenburg Station of Berlin, but to my dismay the train did not stop there. I had only ten minutes in which to change francs to marks, get my ticket to the Russian frontier, have my luggage weighed and registered, and get into the train. And I do not speak German, but the Germans understood. I was put down at Zoological Gardens Station. My porter understood the situation at once, ran me along to some stairs, and pointed down them. I went down; he went "to expedite my baggage," so I understood. I took my ticket, and in doing so offered the girl in the booking-office about six more marks than was necessary. She pushed back the superfluous silver without a smile. Turning round I saw my trunk reposing on the weighing machine. My porter pointed to the registration window. I paid two marks and obtained my receipt and went up the stairs to the platform for the Russian train, and had two minutes to spare.

How efficient the Germans are! They have a great excellence in their way. They permit no one to lose himself, they permit no disorder, everything is done by the chronometer rather than by the watch. They have a genius for orderliness, neatness, and precision. They have our English ideal of thoroughness and smartness, but they seem to have consummated it whilst we have paused in the ways of Destiny and changed our mind in favour of something different. If we could

see Germans in a friendly spirit there are many English who would bow down in admiration to their civilisation. For the Saxon part of English nature has a similar instinct for order, for living one's life like a neatly-worked mathematics paper. It is the aboriginal Celtic base in us which with much that came over with the Normans has frustrated the Saxon element in our race. The British earth itself has formed us, inspired us: hence our kindliness, verve and imaginativeness, human tenderness. Thanks to the ancient Briton in us, we are more like the Russians than the Germans. *There* is a people who are the antipodes of the Germans — wild in their emotions, anarchic in their spirits, amused by laws and regulations, lacking in the instincts that make "progress" possible. Naturally the Russians can't stand the Germans. As a Russian said to me when I recounted how once I left a Kodak behind in the waiting-room at Cologne station, wired from Dusseldorf my Russian address, and eventually received the apparatus in good condition at Rostof-on-the-Don, "The Germans are an accurate people, Oh, Lord, how accurate they are!"

We reached the Russian frontier at one in the morning, and passing in single file gave up our passports to the sentry. At the Custom-house the baggage was submitted to a vigorous examination. An armed Customs officer in a heavy overcoat with black astrakhan collar directed the operations, three or four porters and

inspectors fumbled in the trunks, turning things almost upside down, and a slim girl of twenty-five, a female expert, scrutinised all the clothes for the things that men were not likely to see of themselves — embroidery, lace, silk underwear, neatly packed away Paris blouses, feathers, new costumes with artificial creases and tacked-in dirty linings. But I am not smuggling anything through, and no one takes the trouble even to look at the contents of my books.

I take my ticket to Kief and a supplement to Warsaw. At half-past three we are allowed to board the Russian train and spread out our bedding and make ourselves comfortable. The station is dark and gloomy, the dreariest station in western Russia. As we stand at the windows of the train and look out a strange procession comes up out of the darkness, three-score of men in irons, following a soldier who carries on a pole high above his head a flaming naphtha torch. The faces of the men are pale, furtive, hairy, their shoulders awkward; some are in old blouses, some in collars, some in sheepskins; they are Jews, Poles, Russians, chained together in fours, marching along the railway track to a barred convict-train waiting at a siding. Foot soldiers accompany them with drawn swords in their uplifted hands. They come out of the darkness like living shadows and disappear into the darkness again.

"*Soloveiki*," says the conductor, disparagingly.

"Well," says a Russian, "I don't suppose they're heroes. Poland swarms with thieves and smugglers, and people smuggling themselves across the frontier in order to get to America."

"They are human beings," says another. "They are in chains and we free. It is a heavy sight."

But the second bell and the third bell sound, and the train moves gradually out of the station and nearly every one lies down to sleep. Even when we arrive at Warsaw many of the passengers are snoring and have to be awakened up by acquaintances or porters.

Across the two miles of the slush-covered cobbles of Warsaw, through driving rain and sleet, in an open *droshky* at dawn, from the Vienna to the Brest station.

"*A vam ne skoro!*" says the Russian porter who greets me. "Your train is not soon. The next for Kief is at four o'clock in the afternoon."

I have breakfast, I stroll into the rainy city and back, have a plate of hot soup, read the papers, write letters.

Opposite me in the Kief train was a little girl in simple but antique national attire, in soiled clothes, but having a fresh and delicate classical face and black hair in two plaits, one about each little ear — a rare beauty: it was a piquant pleasure just to look at her.

"When do we get to Kharkof?" she asked.

"Seven, to-morrow night."

"Oh, what a long time! It's a long way: it's the first time I've been away from home."

As the guard blew his whistle she stood up, looked towards the city, and crossed herself.

"Are you a little Russian?" I asked.

"No, a Pole. I was once a Jewess, but have just been baptized. See . . ."

She showed me a little crucifix and the figure of the Virgin on a little medallion hanging from her neck.

"You're a Catholic now?"

"Yes, and I don't like the Jews."

I wondered whether, in view of the ill odour in which the Jews were at that time, she had been told by her mother to announce her conversion very distinctly.

"Such a mama I have!" said she, turning out a basket of provisions — two bags of nuts, several pots of jam, biscuits, a Polish Christmas pudding.

There were in the carriage besides myself and the girl opposite me a Russian student, a young Polish *flaneur*, and a middle-aged, grizzly, smelly, Polish peasant. The young convert offered us all nuts. She was very engaging. She took out a long bottle, put it to her lips and drank from it. She told me it was cold tea with sugar at the bottom of the bottle, but to the Pole announced that it was vodka.

He was fool enough to believe her, and at once cast about in his mind some means of doing her an

ill turn. He came over and made love to her in excited whispers, and was so rude and urgent that at last the girl refused to have anything more to do with him, and turned sullen and angry. He for his part sneaked off to another compartment, and we saw no more of him. After a while the girl relaxed and smiled, took out a large but cracked hand-mirror, looked at her pretty face, and patted the curls to her temples. I got a kettleful of boiling water and made tea for the grizzly peasant and her and myself. Then the peasant climbed on to the shelf above and spread out his big overcoat and slept on it, and the little girl, after explaining that she was going to live with Poles in Kharkof, and that her father played the violin and she the mandoline, and that she was going to take a part in a "troop" and earn her living, undid her black locks, put down a quilt and a pillow, and curled herself up and slept. The conductor came round and searched under the seats for "hares," the flickering candle burned low, and I was about to turn in and sleep when the Russian student, who had been trying to read a newspaper by the aid of a dip of his own, finally gave up the task and set himself to talk to me.

"How far are you going? Where from? What for? How long have you been away from Russia? What interest can Russia have for you? I should have thought the West more interesting . . ." and so on, the usual flood of questions.

Then my questions. "Has much happened in Russia during the year? What are people talking about? What are they doing? What is in the air?"

"Oh," said he, "the Futurists are walking about with gilded noses and dyed faces. The Jew-haters of the Black Hundred want to raise a temple in memory of the Christian boy Yushinsky. Every one has been discussing a play of Artsibashef called *Jealousy*. Literary Russia has been giving a welcome to the Belgian poet Verhaeren, such as you in England have been giving Anatole France. Every one is either hearing or giving lectures about Verhaeren. But I suppose most clamour of all has been raised about Gorky and Dostoieffsky and the Theatre of Art at Moscow. They propose to perform Dostoieffsky's *Demons* at the Theatre of Art, and Gorky has raised a great protest. He holds that Dostoieffsky is so reactionary in tendency that he ought not to be played at the great democratic theatre. Not only that, but he holds that Tolstoy, and, indeed, all Russian literature, is on the wrong side in the struggle for the liberation of the people. He is almost ready to say, "Burn the works of Tolstoy and Dostoieffsky; burn them, and let us be free!"

"How does Russia take it?" I asked. "It is, indeed, true that Dostoieffsky's work is not on the side of progress and freedom. He believed in suffering; he believed in the Russian Church, and was a Christian."

"Russia is mostly against Gorky," said the student. "Merezhkovsky, for instance, has written a brilliant article against him in the *Russian Word*, and he says, 'Yes, Gorky is keenly sensitive, but in Italy or Greece, where he lives,[1] he is too far away to feel what Russia is now. Russia has changed much in the last eight years. Her wounds have healed up, many of them; she has the great hope of the convalescent. If Gorky breathed Russian air he would understand that there was now in Russia a strong religious movement.'"

"And what do you think?" I asked. "Do you possibly agree with Gorky?"

"No. I don't think it is right to steal an instrument from the other side's box of tricks. The Censorship is one of their weapons, not one of ours. The people have loved Dostoieffsky more than they have loved any other Russian author; he is still beloved. We Russians are a religious and loving people. We will never sacrifice humanity for ideas. . . ."

We talked a long time. When I lay down on my shelf to sleep I felt only gladness that I was coming back to Russia, coming to live with her and for her once more, after a year in England and America. It seemed to me a pity that Gorky had not come back the year before when so many exiles took advantage of the Tsar's manifesto, and returned to the open arms of a loving, astonishingly patriotic people!

[1] He had not then returned to Russia.

Next morning at dawn I arrived at Kief, said "Good-bye" to the little girl who was sleepily stretching herself, and to the student who was chatting with a new acquaintance in the gangway and smoking a cigarette. The grizzly peasant I let snore on. . . .

A fine crowd this of the Kief streets, stalwart, diverse, interested in one another, attractive-faced, they are a refreshment, such a refreshment, after Paris and New York.

But I do not reckon that I have achieved the first stage of my journey back till I enter the Cathedral of St. Vladimir and light candles before Queen Olga, King Vladimir, and the Mother and Child, baring my head in the presence of Russia and accepting her sanctuary from the West.

II

MODERN RUSSIA AND HOLY RUSSIA

KIEF, *January* 1914.

ONE of the first friends I visited in Kief was Little-Russian Katia, a typical Russian of to-day, with the problems and prospects of the new-formed middle class.

At the time of the Boer War Katia ran away from school and set off on foot for South Africa as a Russian pilgrim would set out for Jerusalem, with a bundle on her back and a stick in her hand. She would beg her way to the Transvaal and collect money to help the Boers! At the same school, in the time of the riots in Kief, the first class presented an ultimatum to the masters and directors, demanding among other things the right to hold meetings, the right to get books from the public libraries, and equal justice for all pupils irrespective of race, be they Russian, Poles, or Jews! A go-ahead school as far as the scholars were concerned. If a mistress in a fit of anger strikes one of her class, straight away a boycott of her lessons is arranged, and no one answers her questions, no one does any home-work for her.

Katia learnt at school to adore above all things the works of Oscar Wilde. She professes to know his works almost by heart; she sleeps with *The Happy Prince* under her pillow. On a wall in her bedroom hangs a large portrait of Oscar Wilde; in a corner is the sacred ikon, before which on festival nights and for holy days she lights a little lamp. She was the last Russian I had seen when I left Kief some fifteen months before. She was then engaged to Sasha, a thinly-clad, stern, poverty-stricken student, who in order to travel thirty versts on the railway free would take a conductor's job and examine the tickets in the second class. If she married Sasha he would get drunk and beat her; they would live dogs' lives — so every one said. The father, a rich manufacturer, was opposed to Sasha, but then the father was a tyrant; the mother, not on speaking terms with the father, gave countenance to the engagement. Sasha was able to come to all meals and stay as long as he liked with Katia. When Katia was indisposed and thought fit to lie in bed he might spend whole evenings sitting by her. That was all *comme il faut*, for in Russia a betrothed couple are already called bride and bridegroom and have such freedom.

The father, however, cut short Katia's pocket-money and cut short his wife's housekeeping money, and made coarse jokes at the expense of the household. Though Katia was twenty-two years of age

she had no passport of her own. Her father simply kept her name written on his own passport, and in that way cut off the chance of his daughter's running away from home. You cannot get far in Russia without a passport of your own. You certainly cannot get married without a passport and without many documents.

Katia's sweetheart was not at all abashed by his own poverty or by the rudeness of the father. He came to all parties and functions in his shabby clothes. He lectured the father and mother on their behaviour. He was even hard and brusque to Katia herself upon occasion. But he stood up for her dignity, and would have fought any one who insulted her.

. . . . . .

Returning to Kief this month I rather wondered how far Katia's romance had got. Perhaps she and Sasha were now man and wife. But I could not imagine it. One of the felicities of travelling is to pay surprise visits. I had heard nothing from Katia in the interim. So I rang at the door and gave my name to a strange servant and went in and . . .

Exclamations! "Oh, how fine! on the twenty-fifth of January is my wedding," says the same beautiful Katia.

"I congratulate you. I did not know whom to visit first," said I, "you or Sasha."

"Sasha is in Moscow," says Katia with a troubled expression.

"Will you live in Kief?" I ask.

"*I* in Kief," says she with meaning emphasis.

So it is not Sasha that she is marrying.

Presently in comes a bright-looking soldier of rather charming manners, and he is introduced as the bridegroom. He is a guest in the house and has been living there some weeks — Fedor Leonidovitch Smirnoff — who has completed his university course in law, and is now serving his term in the army.

"The date is absolutely settled?" I suppose.

"If papa will take out the papers in time," says Katia.

But the new young man is on good terms with the father. He has evidently plenty of money of his own, and he is a *persona grata.*

"What of Sasha?" I ask Katia aside.

"We quarrelled," says she. "God, how we quarrelled! We were rowing in a boat on the Dnieper, and when I told him it was no good, we could never be married, he shot at me with a revolver. I had to save myself by jumping into the water."

"You've chosen a nice young man this time. Perhaps you are more likely to be happy with him."

"Yes. Everybody likes him."

Fedor is certainly a relief after the sternness of Sasha. He is affable, he is interested in the prices of all things, and is bourgeois, but he says that success and money and luxury do not tempt him. He would like to give up everything and try and find out what life means. He would like to be a wanderer as I am, or to go into a monastery.

All the same, the career assigned to him seems to be that of a lawyer, and as a lawyer, not as a vagabond, will he win the hand of Katia. He will live with her as a wealthy bourgeois European, and not as a Russian.

This modern Kief is a mill where purely Russian types go in and Europeans come out.

"Once a European, always a European," says some one.

"A European may become an American," I hazard.

"But he can never become a Russian again."

"What am I?" asks Katia of me, "a Russian or a European?"

"I don't know. You are changing, perhaps. But keep a Russian!"

One evening, on Katia's advice, I took a sledge across the snow-covered city to Solovtsof's theatre and saw *Jealousy* performed, a story that has had a vast vulgar success in Russia. It is by Artsibashef, the author of the most notorious books of the last ten years. He is the voice of the bourgeois, of the

new commercial middle-class Europeans being turned out at such an astonishing rate by the modern industrialism of Russia. He concerns himself almost entirely with sexual problems, and the relation of woman to man. His outlook in life is something like that of Bernard Shaw, but his criterion in life is not racial progress so much as physical happiness. He mirrors the life of those whose aim is money, whose relaxation is feasting and flirtation. He reflects the growing non-Christian Russia, the increasing mass of Parisian types of men and women obscuring the real Russia.

A crowded theatre, nobody in evening dress, many women pretentiously dressed, many rich townfolk in the stalls, clerks and their sweethearts or their wives in other parts of the house. The play is very well staged, well upholstered, and is vociferously received. What they are cheering is nothing more or less than a series of opinions about women, a disparagement and uglification of the symbol "woman," of what is holiest.

But to quote the opinions gives the play.

In woman first of all it is necessary to awaken curiosity.

Women do not value those who pray to them.

Woman, of course, likes admiration, but only gives herself to the man who despises her a little.

Men are most interesting when they are angry.

Woman is only interesting, vivacious, clever, when she is bathed in the atmosphere of love.

Man is interested in his business, in sport, in thought, but woman is only interested in herself, and if she seems to have interest in other things it is only feigned. Her sole object is to make herself more alluring, more interesting.

We seek Lauras and Beatrices, not knowing that such creatures are only the incarnation of male fancy, and do not and cannot exist.

Girls are charming, but when you marry one you find her to be a tedious *baba* like the rest. At the piano they tinkle, "I am a princess, I am a princess." All young girls are princesses, but you never come across a queen.

A woman lies in a way that a man would not wish to lie, and indeed cannot lie. She lies with her whole being. When a man deceives he grows cool, and in that betrays himself. But a woman returns from another man's love specially languorous, caressing, and tender. . . . Sin must surely set her soul ablaze. Even the most sinful man is ashamed of deceit, and that prevents him from lying effectively. A woman quite sincerely reckons she has a right to deceive. She thinks that to deceive not only does not humiliate her, but, on the contrary, makes her more interesting.

The action of the drama shows two women, one who may be dismissed as a wanton, the other is a flirt who loves her husband best of all. The latter coquettes in various ways with an officer, a student, and a savage Caucasian prince. She leads them on to the last limit of propriety, and evidently finds her sole zest of life in the vanity of having lovers always expecting rendezvous and secret kisses.

The only words spoken on behalf of woman come

from an old fellow who has been three times married — and deceived and made foolish by three women in turn. He says: —

Woman is a magnificent, delicate instrument on which each can play all that he can and will. Of course, put some Beethoven at the piano, and he will find you a wonderful sonata; but put some giftless strummer there, and he rattles out a vulgar polka. We are just such giftless fools, and swear at the instrument because it produces no music. No, friends, you are wrong; woman is sensitive, hospitable, tender, poetic. God gave us woman as an adornment of our lives; we ourselves have spoiled her and complain.

The play *Jealousy* is a sort of public trial of woman, and when at the end the crazy husband of the woman who flirted but loved him best strangles her, it is a sort of verdict, sentence, and execution in one.

How serious the trial is may be judged from the fact that each of the audience is given a pencil and a piece of paper and asked to record his opinion as to whether the man was justified in committing the murder.

How repulsive the whole thing! A play that should put "Woman" adequately on the stage needs many women and the various kinds of men who need from women the things that women can give — faith, love, children. For setting or for evidence it needs the

world. The powers of life and death must stalk across the stage. The stakes for which men bid must be there, and also the

> Stars silent over us,
> Graves under us silent.

Jealousy is the reflection of a shameful way of life. It is trivial, mean, parochial, the rage of talk for a day among the bourgeois of Russia, interesting now, as opposed to the story of Antony and Cleopatra, interesting for ever.

"And what do *you* think of woman?" asked a Kief friend.

"Why," said I, "the beast was a beast until a woman loved him. Then he became a man, even a prince. So it is with all of us. When a woman kisses a man, even an ugly, wretched, despised creature, he knows that he has found grace and is precious in the sight of God. When a woman smiles on a man she bids him live.

"The world is kept fresh by women and children, by their faith and their influence and their prayers. It would have rotted away but for them.

"The love and the faith of women empower men to do things. No man who is out on the adventurous tracks of life but has women behind him, and their love even far away keeps him alive. A woman has cords from her soul to the far-off hands of man, and

at her will can empower men to lift their hands and do things. She has spiritual nervous force."

"But if these cords get broken?" said my friend.

"Ah, then indeed she is in a different position. She finds herself stranded in destiny. She may become a man's plaything or worse. Or she may become a militant suffragist or a believer in secular education or a propagandist of eugenism and hygienics."

"In England," says my friend. "But in Russia we have no woman's movement. She becomes one of Artsibashef's women, no more; a man's plaything and fetish."

Even so.

. . . . . .

What has Artsibashef's play got to do with Russia? It has a good deal to do with her because of thousands such as Katia who are at the crossroads. With her cross, hard, but loving student Sasha she might have been poor and unhappy, but, on the other hand, she would save her soul's health. Whereas with her new-found bourgeois Fedor she may easily enter the world and the atmosphere of *Jealousy*.

Among those I visited at Kief was a certain Vassia, a poverty-stricken doctor who worked from morning to night healing men and women, a specialist in internal diseases but practising in a poor district. He did not receive a fifth of his fees, he healed on trust.

"They come to me suffering: how can I refuse to help?" he would urge when people tried to harden his heart against those who couldn't pay.

An extraordinarily kind, impracticable fellow, with a flat in complete disorder, with an adopted child but no wife; lazy and thieving servants. Neighbours have stolen much of his furniture, even the ikons from some of the rooms; and the candles burn in the empty corners from which the ikons have been stolen! That is Russian.

Vassia and I were invited to an astonishing all-night feast given in honour of Katia on the occasion of her last name-day before marriage.

We sat down to dinner at six, we got up from dinner at half-past eleven; we went to the drawing-room and talked and sang till a quarter past twelve, then we returned to the dining-room for tea and coffee and dessert.

The funniest moments were when the bride's father sat on the floor pretending he was drunk, and when the bridegroom, to prove he was not tipsy, crawled under the table on all fours among the guests' feet and went from one end to the other, and then jumped up and gave a military salute.

They drank too much. They were near quarrelling at the end. One of the guests shouted in a loud voice that Katia's brother had played the piano like a bootmaker.

Then the toasts! They drank twice to everybody in the room, and the men kissed the hands of the women as well as clinking glasses with them. All the bridegroom said at dinner was, "So-and-so, for what reason do you not drink?" though So-and-so was often half-seas over. They drank to absent friends, to Freedom, to Truth, to English Literature — "Let us drink to English Literature, 'urrah!" — to Russian dancing, to Katia, to Katia's figure ("thank God she isn't like a telegraph pole"), to Katia's future happiness.

She changed her dress between dinner and dessert.

Some of the women present had a private view of the bride's linen — eight dozen chemises at a hundred and forty roubles the dozen, and all the rest on a similar scale.

"Fine batiste and lace," said an old lady present, rubbing her fingers together as if feeling the linen; "fine batiste that at the first wash goes into shreds from the chemicals the laundresses use. I wouldn't accept such garments as a gift. It is a sin to wear them. Nowadays, when you live in a city and the washerwoman won't wash naturally, the only thing to do is to wear cheap things and replace them continually."

What was interesting to me was the complete absence of attention on the part of the bridegroom. He could not have treated an enemy more negligently.

It even prompted the German governess, who had unfortunately got a little drunk with champagne, to cry out —

"The bridegroom has not kissed the bride once, why is it?"

Poor Katia! she did not seem to have one true friend amongst all these people, and was possibly marrying to escape from father and home. . . .

But away from these problems! Thousands of sleigh-horses flog the grey-white snow of the Kief streets, flocked with Christmas traffic. The sleighs are loaded with baskets of cakes and sweets. Men are driving, carrying in their arms huge Christmas trees. There are men struggling with little pigs and live geese and turkeys designed for the market or the Christmas dinner. On the slippery sidewalks urchins are crying with cheerful irrelevance: —

"Five copecks, aluminium wonder lights, cold fire without smoke, without smell."

"Five copecks, warm socks to put inside boots or goloshes."

In the Jewish old-clothes market of the Podol there are tremendous crowds, and much business is being done. The mood of Jewry is happy in the Christmas orgy of trade. All is calm after the ritual trial, and the fear of persecution is all gone in the reality of good business. All Kief seems to be in the streets buying; and the tramcars tinkling

their alarm bells are crowded to the last inch of the step-boards.

But somewhere there is another Kief, a quiet radiant city, silent but for the footfalls of monks or pilgrims on the snow — the sanctuaries, monasteries, ruins, shops, hostelries of the Petcherskaya Lavra. This Kief stands high on those cliffs of the Dnieper whence the Russians sent tumbling down their old god Peroun; it looks upon the river to which King Vladimir at the dawning of Russian faith stepped down with his whole army to be baptized. Yellow walls, half a mile long, twenty feet high, go down, alongside steep, snowy, rutty, over-drifted roads, from church to church. Peasant men and women in chestnut-coloured sheepskins, fur-edged and embroidered, are plodding up and down with bundles on their shoulders. Bright gilded domes of churches glitter above white walls, and from many kolokolnyas come antique-sounding chimes. As you look down from a tower you see beyond the thirty-five churches of the beautiful Lavra the blue and white Dnieper, half frozen and snowed over, half free as yet from winter's grip — you see beyond all the far snowy steppes and forests of Little Russia.

Here, in a historical sense, is Holy Russia, for the whole cliff on which the monasteries are built is holy ground. The foundations are honeycombed with cells of the primeval hermits and saints of Russia. You enter dark and narrow passages in the rock, places in

which you cannot stand erect, and you wander candle in hand from shrine to shrine in the depths of the earth. An old monk with black cloak, grey hair, and yellow five-times broken twisted candle, leads you from skeleton to skeleton wrapped in purple pall; shows you now and then a skull, a dried-up hand; points out the picture of the likeness of the saint whose remains you salute, indicating the nickname the hermit bore in the days when he was upon the world, thus: the industrious, the silent, the bookless, the faster, the healer, the herbalist, and so on; thrusting the glimmer of his torch into the intense darkness of the cell which the father had occupied when alive. All day long the peasants wander from sepulchre to sepulchre in this unlocked cemetery or dungeon of the dead, kissing the coffins, laying personal ikons upon the relics in order that they may receive special sanctification, dropping their farthings on the palls, listening to services in remote underground churches, gathering unusual impressions of death, tasting the sweet emotions of religion.

In the hostelries, where are accommodated upon occasion as many as 20,000 pilgrims, you may wander at will and see peasant Russia sprawling on sheepskins and reading holy books, or making tea. You may go into the refectories and see 500 pilgrims sit down together to a free monastery dinner of cabbage soup and porridge and kvass, or you may sit with them yourself

and eat. On this Christmas Eve just past I sat with such a party in the twilight waiting for the first star to come out, the signal to make the holy meal of *Sotchelnik*. It was a different Russia from Katia's, this of the 500 uncouth, shaggy-headed men and women at long dark tables, waiting in front of huge Russian basins full of soup, as the shades of night came down, and the lamp before the Virgin and Child grew brighter and brighter.

You tread with gentle steps across the giving snow and enter one of the churches, and find yourself in an irregularly grouped crowd of antique, hairy, patriarchal-looking men in sheepskins and birch-bark boots. There are no pews or seats, there is no electric light, but there is the gloom and effulgence of much gold and of many half-illuminated paintings and frescoes. You stand with peasant Russia on a stone floor in the glimmer and shadow of an immense candle-lit temple. You pass through with a candle to the front, to the altar-rail lit by scores of steady silver flames, the votive tapers of the pilgrims; you find yourself in the presence of a radiant line of calm, attentive, singing faces. This is Holy Russia independent of historical association. The music you hear in Russian churches robs you of the sense of time. On Christmas Eve in Russia you hear the music of the herald-angels, and see at the same time, in the likeness of the listening Russian peasants, the shepherds who heard the angels

sing. You veritably escape from "the world" and from "to-day," and are so potently reminded of the beauty and mystery of man's life that you shake off all dull cares and the reproach of failure or success, the soil and stain of circumstance, and know that what is *you* is something utterly beautiful before God.

Kief has been called many names — the Canterbury of Russia, the Russian Jerusalem, the Font of Russia — but it may most truly be called the Russian Bethlehem, the place where Christ was born in Russia, adored by rude shepherds, sought by the noble and the wise.

III

PEREPLOTCHIKOF AGAIN

Moscow, *February* 1914.

I WENT to Moscow to see my old friend Vassily Vassilievitch Pereplotchikof, the painter. He received me in his house in the Sadovia, in that mysterious sitting-room of his where scores of his paintings are always standing with their faces to the wall, like very shy young maidens who wait till it is their turn to be shown to society and to their prospective suitors.

During the summer in America which I had tramped, he had been seeking impressions on the barren Arctic island of Nova Zemlia. What a contrast in our fields of action! He in the silent snow-swept island; I on the luxurious mainland of the New World. Vassily Vassilitch prefers places like Nova Zemlia, where, as it were, candles are burning in corners from which ikons have been taken away. We exchanged our impressions.

Nova Zemlia has only a hundred inhabitants, one steamer calls there in the year. There is only one post. In winter there is three months darkness without light; in summer two months light without

darkness. The ice and snow do not melt away even in July, and the colonists — trappers and hunters — live a stark life in opposition to the storm and stress of nature. They are dead to the world — the world all dead to them until the prow of their one annual steamer comes into view on the ocean in July. The day of its arrival they call their Easter, and they do not hold Easter according to the calendar in the dark and terrible spring, but postpone their holiday till life is born again with the coming of the ship. Their resurrection day is when their brother-man comes again to them. In the arriving of the ship they see Jesus walking towards them on the sea.

Vassily Vassilitch told me this with a subtle emphasis. I felt rich in having Vassily Vassilitch as a friend, for I realised he was able to tell me sacred things. This evening of our seeing one another again he read me many poems which he had written "not to print, but for his own pleasure." All that he says has a deep human interest, a significant emphasis and luminous suggestiveness that may be recognised in his paintings also.

Vassily Vassilitch left Archangel for Nova Zemlia one morning in July. The boat steamed placidly and peacefully out of the vast and enlarged Dwina into the White Sea, and then out of the White Sea into the cold and buffeting Arctic. On board were two Government officials going to consider "Colonisation," an English artillery officer, an astronomer, a journalist

from Archangel, a monk going to relieve another monk and spend the winter on the island, peasant fur-buyers, carpenters, and workmen.

The monk was one of the most interesting characters, and told how a Samoyede once in a storm dug a hole in the snow and lay there three or four days, and slept till it was over. When the blizzard ceased he broke out of his white grave and went home. He told how there was once such a storm on Easter Eve that he and the villagers had to crawl to church on hands and knees. Coming home they were all blown about half a mile out of their course.

From the hunting expeditions the islanders nearly always brought home young bears taken alive, and they fed them and reared them and eventually sold them into menageries and circuses. The monk had two young bears one season and they were very much attached to him. They followed him everywhere and would take food from his hands alone. If by any chance he escaped them and got away by himself to do something they raised a *scandal*. However, on the return journey to Archangel the monk lost one of them. When they were some 250 miles out at sea one of the bears broke her fastenings, jumped into the ocean and swam away. And she swam all the way back to the harbour and was recaptured by the Samoyedes there. The other bear gave a lot of trouble at Archangel by absolutely refusing to be tended by any one else but the

monk who had brought him. But at last the monk exchanged his cassock with some one else, and it was found that the bear at once transferred his obedience, and that he could be managed by any one who wore the monk's garments. The monk therefore sold the cassock with the bear, and both are now part of the stock-in-trade of a circus. In this case the habit did make the monk.

The boat had an open hatchway, and the captain was for ever crying out: —

"More careful, people! Don't fall down the hole. Once the Governor of Archangel fell down there; he didn't get hurt because he fell on a chambermaid who was passing. Once an official fell through and broke twelve bottles of various drinks; he didn't get hurt either, but was much upset when we gave him the bill for the drinks. Another official was reading a bit of paper and stepped over and fell on some baskets — he also didn't get hurt; but be careful all the same. And various ordinary passengers fell. . . ."

But, as it happened, some tremendous weather overtook the ship, and not many dare move from their places in the cabins. So the hatchway remained open without misadventure.

It was touching — Vassily Vassilitch's account of their coming into view of the shore, and the whole population of the little colony standing staring at the ship with greedy eyes, the first visitors to them from

the great family of mankind on the rest of the world, their Easter. Poor lonely ones! With what thirst they exchange the first greetings and questions!

"How have you got on?"

"Any sick?"

"Any dead?"

"Have you shot many bears?"

"How's trade?"

The islanders had suffered very much from scurvy during the year. The day before the vessel arrived a man had died of it and Vassily Vassilitch saw the funeral. It took place about midnight. From one of the huts came the *klak, klak, klak,* of the nailing up of the coffin. The coffin issued from the little village borne on a dog-drawn hearse, then followed the priest in his gilded raiment, the frantic widow, the mourners. "Holy God," they sang, "Holy Strong One, Holy Immortal," and the dogs all whined and howled. In the bitter shadowy night they bore the corpse away, over grey earth and rags of snow, far away to the side of a black tumbling river, and the midnight sunshine gleamed on all the snowy mountain peaks, catching the light from the horizon where the sun seemed poised.

Vassily Vassilitch showed me a copy he had made of a diary kept by a Russian peasant who had died of scurvy. Two Russian peasants settled on a desolate part of the island to spend the winter and hunt. It

was somewhat pathetic that the man doomed to die should have had the idea of keeping a log-book. The story tells much of Russian patience, simplicity, tenderness, pluck. I quote only a few entries from the diary:—

November 30. — Bear came to door of hut and began to gnaw the carcase that was there. Snatched my gun, but he saw me and was off and I dare not follow in the dark.

December 5. — Daylight was short. Hardly got a shot before it was dark. Eve of the day of my angel. In the evening drank tea. Washed my body at a basin for want of a bath. Changed my linen. Lighted lamp before the ikon.

February 1. — Cloudy and windy. Shot some seals. Had great difficulty in bringing them home. We have colds. Northern lights.

February 28. — Heavy weather. Both seriously ill. Extraordinary pain. First the toes ache as if frozen, then it goes into the legs, into the knees and muscles. Man must lie down. Over his whole body and arms a rash breaks out.

In March the scurvy was too much for him; the diary is continued by the hand of his mate, who writes on April 16: —

To-day Kulebakin (the former writer of the diary) was in pain and delirium, but afterwards calmly and peacefully gave back his soul to God. Weather cloudy to clear. No water. Dug the grave. All by myself now. No one to talk to now. It is sad.

April 21. — Lighted a candle and burnt incense over Kulebakin, and then carried him to the grave. Bright and sunny day. No water.

April 23. — The ice has cleared. Hung a torn shirt on the mountain instead of a flag. I still wait on the chance of some one coming from the settlement. It is very dreary. Pain in the legs. Walk with difficulty. Need to gather strength against illness. Nothing to eat but bread.

At this point the diary comes entirely to an end, and it might have seemed the writer was dead, but a peasant came from the settlement, rescued him, and carried him back, and he returned to Russia and recovered. The astonishing thing is he came back again to Nova Zemlia, and wintered and hunted, repeating the experiment. A tough fellow!

One of the sights of Nova Zemlia is the cemetery, with its tumbled and broken crosses. The dead sleep there in the Russian faith even as they sleep far away in tropical Turkestan and the pleasant borders of Persia. Not only a nation stretching from West to East, these Russians, but diving four or five thousand miles from North to South. How do they support life in the Far North? They have to have their vodka there.[1] There is a big supply of it on the ship for them. It will not, however, be sold to them till all the business of fur-selling is accomplished and the cargo brought on board, and the ship is ready to steam away. The sale of vodka begins only after the second blast of the hooter. The day after the boat leaves

[1] Before the vodka prohibition. How they get on now it would be difficult to say.

the island there is an orgy of drinking, and in a short while all the vodka disappears and there ensue months of enforced sobriety.

The island has a loving and striving priest who wrestles with the people for their souls.

Vassily Vassilitch came upon him sobbing. There had been a case of cheating on the island.

"I try to make them good men and women," said the priest; "I pray for them. I pray with them, and yet see how they cheat and drink and forget all that they learn!"

Vassily Vassilitch went right round the island calling at the various points where there were inhabitants, painting a little, talking to the people. It is a wonderful island, a continuation of the Urals, very rich in metals, very mountainous. There were no trees, however, and though there were bright and beautiful flowers and birds and butterflies it was ever bleak and windswept. There was not a mosquito or hornfly in the island even in July.

Coming home the ship passed through a field of icebergs. Vassily Vassilitch for the first time in his life saw a mirage. It gave him the idea that all that he had seen on the island was really a mirage, a dream, an insubstantial pageant; that life itself was such.

When he heard the last of the growling and snapping of the twelve or fifteen bears tied up on deck and stepped off on to the pier and sat once more in an

Archangel *droshky*, clattering over the cobbles of the muddy town, he felt indeed that all that he had seen and heard was something folded and hidden away in the everyday, a wonderful, fantastic, even absurd and improbable dream.

"Some time, perhaps, after we die and awake elsewhere, we shall look back on life and say the same of it," said he.

IV

AT THE THEATRE

Moscow, *March* 1914.

At Moscow at one of the meetings of the Religious and Philosophical Society I met Namirovitch Danchenko, the manager of the Theatre of Art, and he invited me to see five or six pieces of the repertory. This gave me great pleasure and interest.

An interesting figure in the stalls of the theatre on the first night I was there was Maxim Gorky, who had unexpectedly returned after eight years' involuntary exile, and now looking at the theatrical presentation of Dostoieffsky's novel, *The Possessed*, against which he had been writing from abroad in such a way as to provoke all literate Russia to discussion. His hair cut short, his black blouse put aside for European jacket and waistcoat and collar, the tramp-author looked somewhat shorn of the mystery of his personality. As he tripped quickly past me in one of the *entr'actes* in his light evening boots it was easy to think he used to be a more real character in *sapogi*. For the rest, he did not look in bad health, was even

a little flushed with colour. But his face was nervous, self-conscious. I should say it is not by any means the old Gorky that has returned.

There was considerable excitement in the theatre amongst those who knew of the novelist's presence, Moscow being crazy to welcome Gorky with banquets and speeches and newspaper headlines, but being unable to do so, because Gorky's health will not stand excitement, and because he can remain happily in Russia only on condition that he keeps quiet.

I was sitting next to M. Lakiardopulo, the secretary of the theatre. "You know how he has been slating us," whispered he to me. "There was a time when on such an occasion Gorky would have stood up in his seat and addressed the house, saying, 'Why do you come to see such a thing, it is no good; it is reactionary, and only helps to put back the progress of Russia?' But he is afraid to do it now. He is not sure of the Russia to which he has returned."

Around Gorky and the spirit of Dostoieffsky rage for the time being all the questions of the hour in Russia — Apollo *versus* Dionysus, Progress and Westernism *versus* Life understood as a religious orgy; Materialism *versus* Mysticism. How weak is the power of the West may be seen in the guise of its champion — Gorky with his foot in his grave, Gorky, whose wonderful literary gift Italy and Greece have withered.

But Gorky, frustrate as he seems, has effectually raised the question and set Russia thinking and differentiating.

> I have a strange, strange feeling about Moscow (says he), a mournful feeling. . . . Were the Moscow streets and the Moscow people like this before, or do I only remark it now because I have seen what it is like in the West? There, in Italy, amidst the brilliance and magnificence of Nature, in the magnificent chaos of cities buzzing with automobiles, humming with factories, you feel at least that Man is not losing himself; you feel he is the master, the centre. His voice is full-sounding, it is ever in one's ears, the voice of one who is master of earth and master of his life. But in Moscow! On the streets I feel the people are all voiceless. The pavements are populous, lively, noisy; there are people of all kinds going to and fro, but the actual human voice of mankind seems to be utterly silent. The people are all gloomy, melancholy, above all, angry. The women have widow's faces. . . . Is it possible it was like this when I was here before?

Gorky, despite his experience in what may be called the absolute West — America [1] — has come back enchanted with the West. The idea accepted in the revolutionary days that the West was good, the West was Russia's bright destiny providentially

[1] Gorky went to America to raise money to help the Revolutionary Party in Russia, but was hounded out of the country as an immoral man. The newspapers started a campaign against his private life, and despite American sympathy for the cause of "liberty" he was forced to leave the country. No hotel would take him in.

lighted before her for her to follow, has died out almost unremarked. Gorky alone, all these eight years, has nursed it, and he has been writing stories and dramas which fall flatter and flatter on the ears of Russia. The Theatre of Art alone has refused in turn each of his last eight plays! No wonder the faces seem to him preoccupied.

He cannot understand why the Theatre of Art, in its working out of a new life for the theatre in general, should take *The Brothers Karamazof* and *Besi* (*The Possessed*). Were there not new writers who would breathe the new ideals and new hopes of Russia into the work of the stage? Dostoieffsky was a genius, but in Gorky's opinion an evil genius — the evil genius — the evil genius of Russia which Russia must overcome, an abscess on the Russian body. Dostoieffsky was profoundly national, yes, but he expressed the Asiatic side of the Russian. "If Russians give themselves up to Dostoieffsky they will become like China," said he. "In each of us sits a Dostoieffsky — we have to overcome him."

Well, the great fact of this month is that Gorky's protest has had the fullest publicity, and has been discussed at many hundred public meetings and in numberless newspaper articles, and yet the great mass of the people have supported the Theatre of Art and Dostoieffsky — even although the performance of *The Possessed* is but a poor experiment.

The difference between Eastern and Western literature may be aptly contrasted. I read last summer in the letter of an American to an English publisher something of this kind: —

> Mr. So-and-So's novel may be a success with you, but we shan't be able to do much with it over here as it ends on a note of failure; the reader must be quite sure that the hero and heroine, whatever troubles they may have at the beginning, are going to win through in the end. Anything that ends on a curse or a suicide or hysteria is almost sure to fall commercially dead over here.

Now the Russian considers failure and despair and cursing and suicide as a glory, and success to be a reproach — the likely destiny of Jews or earth-swallowers. America and the West prize the whole, the sound, the substantial banking account, the ideal marriage, domestic bliss, correct collars and ties, creases where they should be on the right sort of attire, that glamour of materialism which Mr. Bennett so satisfactorily renders in his descriptions of hotel apartments and the clothes of the soulless. But Russia, even Gorky in his best days, prizes the barefooted tramp, the consumptive and disease-stricken, the imbecile, the improvident, the man who has no sense of the value of money, the poverty-stricken student of Chekhof's *Cherry Garden* who can refuse money, saying, "Offer me two hundred thousand, I wouldn't take it. I am a free man. And none of

all that you value so highly is any use to me. I can do without it on the way to higher truth."

The grandeur of the West, Gorky's "magnificent chaos of cities buzzing with automobiles and humming with factories" only prevent, *tolko meshait*, as Russians say so constantly. Man's voice is loud because he has to overcry noisy machines; it is loud also because, like a child, he is wildly excited over his toys. It is unjustifiably loud.

But Gorky, like a fond savage, would give up broad lands and a fair birthright for coloured beads and toys.

Round about *Besi* rages also the question of the future of the theatre. Moscow is likely to become the literary capital of Europe; it is already the theatrical capital. Whatever it is working out is likely in time to affect the whole stage of Europe.

Almost every one in Russian literature has contributed something towards the question of the new development of the theatre. Strange to say, it is a question of the theatre and the producer, not a question of the dramatist. That is a starting point.

The two fundamental ideas which are in contrast are again that of East *versus* West, Materialism *versus* Mysticism. One party derives the theatre from the puppet-show and the elaborated Punch and Judy show, suggests a theatre of dolls or types, and above all things heralds "the glorious cinema" as the womb of the theatre-to-be — that is the Western notion of

the theatre, a show to arrest passers-by, divert them and coax coppers from them. The other party derives the theatre from the ancient mystery, and requires that in the theatre of the future the audience shall collaborate with those on the stage, the footlights shall be disenchanted, there shall be mystical dancing and singing and horror and exaltation — this is the Eastern notion.

The latter seems at first glance far removed from possible realisation in the present, a dream of the impractical even romantic and absurd. But when we remember that church and theatre were once one and the same, all plays being holy, and that our Mass or Communion Service was in a sense a survival of the Holy Mystery wherein not only the actors, *i.e.* the priests and those who serve at the altar, took part but also the people themselves, then it is seen to be not quite so remote.

The Shaw plays are remarkable examples of the developed Punch and Judy show, where various bizarre dolls with funny faces reel off amusing speeches, all of which are just audibly prompted by the man who holds the strings. He tries to create the illusion that the dolls are flesh and blood — for that reason he sometimes will have even a doll-representation of himself on the stage, as in the case of Mr. Tanner in *Man and Superman*. And if we are deceived for a moment or an hour and the illusion succeeds and we

discuss the acts of Punch and Judy, and Judy's mother, and the Counsel for the Prosecution, and Toby, and the Judge, as if they were real people, yet when we get home we reflect after all it was all Shaw — "awfully clever, very funny, but it was the man behind the red curtain talking all the while; we must tell so-and-so they ought to go."

The Ibsen play is more or less a game of chess; again observe the skilful moving of puppets on a board. His drama is specialised intellectually. It is interesting to keen minds, but not diverting, not so elementary as Shaw. *Peer Gynt*, however, is a mystery play, or could be taken as such; there are parts in it not only for the prime actors but for everybody in the theatre. The sad fact is that the theatre audiences are heavy. They are not quite so heavy in Russia as in England, for no one here considers his dinner as of any importance beside being at the theatre; and indeed if you are not punctual at the Theatre of Art you find the doors are closed and you cannot get in. But all the same the people are heavy, clinging to their seats as if in them they had found refuge. The moderns are not the Greeks. The minds and souls of the modern Russians are at the disposal of the Hierophant of the Mystery, but the bodies are more enslaved by gravity than lead. So, in the near future at least, there can be no active collaboration between audience and actors, no real disenchantment

of that line of lamps separating the stage from the world. Perhaps in time choruses will be devised for audiences — even now in English music-halls where the people sing the choruses of the popular songs there is a witness of the possibility of the realisation of such an idea. Perhaps in time a part of the public may take part in dances or may march with banners and emblems, or opportunity may be given to public characters of the day to make their exits and their entrances, and make speeches not to be found in the books of words. But all this belongs to the thrice-interesting future, not to the tantalising present moment.

All that the theatre is doing now is to put the dramatist in his place and give scope to the producer and the Master of Ceremonies. The Theatre of Art, the Moscow Free Theatre, and in London, as a beginning, Granville Barker's theatre, are all working for a new, large, vital stage. In a sense it is futuristic work, for it takes no inspiration from the past, unless from ancient Greece. It regards all the work of the last few thousand years as makeshift. It will work out something worthy of Man, something noble and enduring. Then again Man will have a voice, and not that gay, confident, business cry to which Gorky has fondly given his ear. And that brings me back to *Besi* (*The Possessed*), at which I was sitting with Gorky in front of me and the genial secretary at my side.

Besi, or, as it is entitled in the programme, *Nikolai Stavrogin*, is an example of the present work of the Theatre of Art. The theatre that will produce *Pickwick Papers* as a play and can set one of its own staff to work out the libretto is not in need of dramatists at present. *Nikolai Stavrogin* was arranged by Namirovitch Danchenko, and it is a presentment in some fifteen or twenty scenes of the vital portions of Dostoieffsky's novel. It assumes that the public has read the book and knows it well, and so, subtly, makes the person sitting in his seat collaborate, by supplying in his mind the missing links. The performance commences at 8 P.M. and finishes about 12.30. All the while you are considering failure — death to all Americans.

In the first scene, a very beautiful one, with little village church and worshippers and beggars and lackeys, the bells are set a-ringing and you open the doors of the temple of your soul and admit the whole Russian world of the suffering. The stage becomes the forecourt of your heart, and the many people in the mystery commune with your sympathies. It must be said that from an English, even from a Celtic point of view, the story is rather desperate, somewhat unredeemed; the dream-picture that you see is rather the nightmare of some one who is too conscious of being ill himself — the epileptic Dostoieffsky. Dostoieffsky's physical ills and personal downheartedness

are interesting in his biography, but blemishes in his artistic work. All those long novels were written as almost everlasting *feuilletons*, scribbled often while the printer's devil was waiting, or writhed into black and white in the still hours of lonely poverty and feebleness, in dreary midnight hours in St. Petersburg. In order to understand them truly you need Dostoieffsky himself somewhere on the stage, or in the heart.

V

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE PEOPLES

Moscow, *March* 1914.

DURING the summer, in which I lived in a cottage in the Urals, there passed my window an endless procession of weary tramps, not in flocks or crowds, in hundreds or in fifties, but in twos and threes day by day. I saw them on the highway stamping their weak boots and bruised feet in the deep August dust, trudging forward patiently, patiently. They would come to the door, untie the black kettle that dangled from the pack on their shoulders, beg water to make tea, sit down to munch our peasant-wife's pastry, resting their ragged elbows on the unvarnished table, holding a saucerful of hot tea in both hands, and sucking at it and breathing over it in manifest appreciation and satisfaction.

I would ask one of them, "What are you, brother, a pilgrim?"

"No, brother, we seek land," he would answer. "Where we live it is too close; we live too near together, we are going to Siberia to get land."

"And where do you come from?"

"From Tambovsky Government, from Penzensky, from Nizhegorodsky," they would answer. From all the more crowded parts of Central Russia. They were *pereelentsi*, migratory Russians, children of the womb of nations, the race ever pushing out from the centre, extending Russia to the East and the South and the North.

Wherever you go to-day you find on the confines of the Empire, and indeed beyond the confines, the wandering poverty-stricken emigrant-tramp; in Siberia, in Russian Turkestan, in Mongolia, Persia, Turkey. Anon he grows tired, or he finds his happy valley and settles down, forming the nucleus of a new Russian colony, or adding to the strength of one already existent. After him comes the Russian army, claiming interests, and the Russian flag, claiming sovereignty or giving protection; but it must always be remembered that the movement is first of all natural, it is not merely aggressively imperial. It is not even encouraged by the Government; thousands of the tramps die of privation every year, thousands get thrown into prison for being, as is often the case, *bez-passportny* (without passports); the people they meet on the way call them fools going from bad conditions to perhaps worse — but the tramps go on. They say they seek a better land, but God alone knows what they really seek, what they imagine they may see at the next turning of the long, long road.

If you stay at Chelyabinsk, the eastern gate of

Russia, you may see thousands of these wanderers. And it is interesting to compare their type with those whom you see at Libava, the western gate of Russia.

Through Libava pass the greater number of those who are going to America. Every ten days the Russo-Asiatsky Lloyd embarks a thousand or two thousand emigrants, every week vessels sail for London and Hull carrying Russians who have booked by the Cunard and the White Star and other lines. From Russia there pass over to America more colonists than from any other country in the world — upwards of 275,000 people every year. A great number of these are Jews and Poles and Lithuanians. For many years the number of actual Russians had been few; but in 1913 there were of Russians alone more than of any other nationality in the world. They are richer Russians these. They have money to show to the inspectors at Ellis Island; they have trunks full of clothes. They could not carry their burdens on their shoulders; they have come to the port in trains. They are not melancholy and dusty and bearded like the tramps, but bright-eyed, well-dressed, so as to pass muster at the inspection. They are making a bold bid for new life; they have had the courage to pay for the new life with all the old; to take a jump in the dark, and trust God. They do not belong eternally to the road; and they are not carrying the cross on their backs, as are those melancholy tramps of Siberia.

The Siberian emigrants stop at many factories and mines and do a few days' work, and are perchance shot down like dogs, at a place like the Lena gold-washings, or they settle in a fever-stricken swamp and are swept away by pestilence. But for the most part they come to no harm, dying eventually of old age, full of memories, poverty-stricken all their lives, and yet in a spiritual sense rich, confessing always that they were strangers, seeking something better than that they were leaving behind.

But they who go out at the western gate take their chance of strange destiny. They are cast off from Russia and from that understanding of life that Russia breathes. They go to be the most unfortunate class in America, the simplest and therefore the most exploited; they go to do work fitted better to black slaves; their young women, though they do not know it, are often already sold into infamy whilst they breathe the "air of freedom" on the steamer; and often the men, contracted in gangs to the Argentine and Brazil to work on railways and plantations, are simply living merchandise for which the labour agent who engages them receives a substantial premium. They go to work as Russians never worked before, and to receive double the wages they would get in Russia, and then to realize that money buys little or no extra happiness. Or they go to settle on the land and form a Russian community, as the Dukhobors have done in Canada,

the Molokans in California, the Adventists in the Dakotas and in the backwoods of America, to forget that they are not in Russia, to be as much in debt to the agricultural machine manufacturers as they were in arrears in the payment of rent and taxes in the old country, to perish of starvation in lean years, to be persecuted by educational and sanitary officials, and to be spurred on once more to seek a happier country. Others are destined to enter the choir-dance of the races with Jew and German and English and Irish, marrying the foreigner and merging the European in the new type — the coming American.

At Odessa, the southern gate of Russia, the pilgrims are embarking for Mount Athos and Palestine a thousand at a time, an unexpected delivery of bowed and aged men and women out of the depths of Russia. There you may see another of the continual movements of the people of Russia, an astonishing procession this to those who are absorbed in the commercial life of Russia, to those Jews and exiled Russians who write to the English papers that the outward signs of Russian religion are "the mummery of the Holy Synod." At Odessa, and indeed on all the roads of Russia, there are many thousands of pious Russians, pack on back, staff in hand, on their way to the monasteries and holy places, to the sepulchre, to Kief, to the Hermitage of Father Seraphim, to New Athos, to many a little wayside shrine and monastery that only has its ten

pilgrims where the great ones have their hundreds and their housefuls.

It has been said that with an Englishman the conversation always, sooner or later, turns to sport, with a Frenchman to woman, and with a Russian to the subject of Russia.

This is true of the educated classes of society; but the peasants do not talk of these things so much — the peasants' talk nearly always turns to God and religion. The Russians are always *en route* for some place where they may find out something about God, and if there is a particularly animated conversation in the hostelry of a monastery, a third-class carriage, or a tea-shop or Russian public-house (*traktir*), it is almost always sure to be about religion.

The modern evangelical movement may almost be said to have had its birth in the famous but filthy public-house, "Yama," where originally over vodka and beer, and later more commonly over tea, the question of salvation was continually mooted. In the third-class carriage you will occasionally come across an old man who reads an antique Bible through iron-rimmed spectacles. He has heard that a new sect has been formed by some peasants in some remote village, and is off to discover "whether they have found anything."

Then what of those who march in chains from prison to prison on the road? Often I have stopped

my writing on a bright summer morning to listen to an appalling sound — the clank, clank, clank, of fifty or sixty men in fetters — and I have looked out at a procession of unfortunate Russians, dust from head to foot, the sun flashing on the bright steel links on their legs and their bodies. They also belonged to the road. They move us to the depths of sorrow or to hoarse anarchy; but they are of the road. Their vague shuffled footmarks are the writing of the finger in the dust. They are symbolical. We also walk as they. Listen with "the third ear," and you will hear the clangour of our chains as we tramp —

> having unearthly souls,
> Yet fettered and forged to the earth!

The world is like a theatre, is it not? The theatre should reflect the world and touch man to a remembrance of his mystery. He comes into it to be stirred by pity and fear, not simply to be amused between dinner and sleep. He comes into it as to a Communion Service, not merely to receive, but to partake. Such a theatre is the world, with its marches and processions, its lively and its heavy measures, its sacrifices, its words of ancient wisdom from the lips of priests, words of prophecy from oracles, the joyful choruses and jubilations, its sympathies and choruses of sadness, its ramified manifold movements and counter-movements. Most moving of all is the procession to the altar and the songs we sing carrying our emblems.

"Having been at home in many realms of the spirit," it is good to realise this theatre in the heart. Having a personal knowledge of the road to Jerusalem and to America, and of the pilgrims and tramps on the various roads of Russia, having even been marched six days along the road under arrest on one occasion, it is good to realise all that is happening at one and the same time in Russia — the flocking to Jerusalem and to America, the trickling into Siberia and Mongolia and Turkestan and Persia, the tramping to the monasteries to find God, the tramping to cities and factories to get work, the third-class carriages of the trains crammed with people, the uproarious taverns where is all manner of exchange of rude ideas, the beautiful churches alight with candles and paintings, the little theatres and cinema shows as crammed as the churches, the bazaars and fairs, the prisons, the poor prisoners on the road clanking their chains.

Every common sight is charged with significance. This is the source of the Russian spirit and the genius of Russian literature and fine art. Thus, for instance, when you mention "smoke" to a Westerner he at once thinks of factory smoke and that which pains the eyes or darkens heaven. But to the Russian smoke is always

That which comes forth out of the censer,

the smoke of the sacrifice, the smoke of our lives — the sighs and regrets and fears and aspirations of men and women, our crooked smokes, which, in the language of Shakespeare, mount upwards to the gods.

In such an atmosphere Russians can forget personal anger when looking at the chains on their convicts, and they can see in those chains emblems of human destiny. There is in Russia a whole beautiful sad literature about chains and fetters. Hermits and holy men have even taken to wearing chains voluntarily as one of their rites of world-negation. Dostoieffsky could find Siberia, after personal experience, to be the supreme place for the understanding of the world.

We are encompassed about by mystery. Every common sight is a rune, a letter of the Divine alphabet written upon all earthly things. Man's heart is a temple with many altars, and it is dark to start with, and strange. But it is possible with every ordinary impression of life to light a candle in that church till it is ablaze with lights like the sky. That is the functions of ordinary sights — to be candles.

So the night of ignorance is lit up with countless stars. It is not less night but more, more beautiful —

> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings.

At those places on the road where springs gush from the rocks the peasants have chalked the face of Jesus, so that the water seems to pour from His mouth. At these springs stop the pilgrims, the emigrants, the wayfarers, even the poor prisoners and their guards. That is one of the visions of Holy Russia.

VI

LET US GO INTO THE TAVERN

Moscow, *March* 1914.

IN a sense the tavern is also a theatre or a church. It is a place of life.

"I am glad you've come," said a friend to me; "keep your ears open; this is the very bottom; everything springs from here. This is the changing-house of the ideas of the common people."

There is no "bar," in the English sense. On the long wooden counter are bottles and glasses, and plates of sausage and ham. But you do not lounge there and gossip over your glass. The Russian public-house is all tables and chairs, like the accommodation for a smoking concert. But such dirty chairs and tables!

You sit down; you are attended by a waiter. There is an army of waiters serving for 30s. a month and no tips. They are in white blouses, white trousers, and white aprons, and they look as if they had strayed into the filthy hall in their night attire. On one wall is a square candle-lantern with the word TRAKTIR printed on it in decayed brown; on another wall is an im-

mense gilt ikon. The doors creak heavily to and fro, admitting customers unreadily — how unlike the little swing doors of the American saloons, so easy to open that you may slip in as it were by accident. At almost all the tables are working-men and women drinking tea, vodka, or beer, talking loudly.[1] There are many cabmen in their round fur hats and voluminous blue cloaks; many market-women in their cottons, with soiled coloured kerchiefs on their heads. You see twenty people drinking tea to one drinking vodka — they pour the tea into the saucers, hold the saucers to their hairy mouths, and guzzle at the gratifying golden drink. But if you look about you will notice vodka-drinkers, some asleep, with their unkempt heads on the table (looking like tramps asleep in a free library); you see also men with red cheeks and fiery eyes not yet overcome by liquor, but ready to bawl and make a scandal at the least provocation. The atmosphere is heavy with the smoke of the vilest tobacco in the world (*makhorka*). A blind musician is playing the concertina, several people are singing, hawkers with pies, with Bibles, with shirts, with pencils, with old clothes, are going from table to table offering their wares. There is tremendous bargaining and long-drawn-out haggling on the part of people who, it would seem, do not really intend to buy, even at the last. There are beggars, cripples, blind men,

[1] Since the War vodka has of course disappeared.

dwarfs, asking for alms in the name of Christ. There are drunken hooligans trying to get drinks for nothing. There are antediluvian pilgrims hundreds of miles from home, not going to a shrine, but collecting coppers throughout all Russia for the building of a new church in their far-away native villages. You may even see upon occasion a peasant carrying a great church bell. You ask him why. He tells you the church of his village was by the will of God destroyed by a fire, and that only the bell remains, and he is collecting alms to build a new church and hang up the bell again.

Throughout the whole tavern all day and almost all night is a clamour of talking and an animated scene of gesticulating, unwashed, ragged men and women. Almost all the small business of hawkers, stall-keepers, and little traders is accomplished over vodka or tea in the *traktir*, but indeed the successful, even the millionaire, peasant merchant will step without a ruffle of dignity into the most miserable tavern of the city, and not be too proud to answer the taunts or questions of ragamuffins. That is part of Russia's strength.

Then, the home is not all-absorbing in Russia, and even the poorest people like to spend the whole evening in the tavern drinking tea, talking, talking, talking. No one would reproach a Russian for lingering thus away from his wife and little ones. Not much money is spent, man for man. In three or four hours it often happens that a man spends no more than five copecks

(a penny farthing), and has only purchased a little teapot of tea and a big teapot of hot water, the tavern's substitute for the samovar.

Kuprin tells the tale of a tavern in Odessa famous for one of its ragged musicians, Sasha. He filled the public-house with the strains of the violin, and every night the place was packed with men and women. Every table was occupied, there was tea or beer or vodka everywhere, all the men were smoking *makhorka*, the windows were all shut, and the air was of that warm, dense, suffocating character that the Russian people like. A din as of Babel pervaded the hall, and no one except those near the music could hear Sasha's tunes, yet every one felt that they were hearing.

Sasha would come in in the early hours of the evening, when people were few, would take his first mug of beer and then begin to play, mournfully, melancholily. His were sad, heart-aching tunes, full, as it were, of a world's sorrow. He sat in his accustomed place and brooded over his violin, seemingly uninterested in everything but the soul of music.

The windows of the tavern were crusted with ice or clouded with steam, and the shadows of men and women passed incessantly, some lingering, some hurry-

ing. But Sasha did not heed them, nor notice how many came in at the dark and dirty doorway from the street. Only when there got to be a crowd he began to put aside his own repertory of songs, and take up those that were suggested by the customers, that were shouted in his ear —

"Sasha, play *Maroosia.*"

"Sasha, play *The Nightingale*, play *Spring has passed by.*"

Then, till the small hours of the morning, he would play what people wanted him to — sad songs, gay songs, marches, dances, country measures — dances, dances, dances, every dance in Russia he played, and the tables were crushed back and a space made and the people danced.

Every night, every week, every month Sasha was there, and the crowd and the music and the air thick with *makhorka* smoke. Not that the nights were always the same. Events in the town, in Russia, had their echoes there. In the time of the South African War Sasha played twenty times a night the *March of the Boers*. During the festivities of the Franco-Russian Alliance he played the *Marseillaise*, which was fearfully popular with the dock-labourers. When the Japanese War broke out he played all those sad tunes about far Manchuria and fighting in a strange land.

Alas, the Japanese War made a great change in the tavern. Sasha was taken for a soldier and disappeared

from ken. For a year and a half no word was heard from him or of him. He was given up for dead, and the tavern lost its old attraction. At last, however, one night in came Sasha, the same as ever, unhurt, untouched. He had been captured by the Japanese and held a year as a prisoner at Nagasaki. He had learned Japanese music. Not that anybody wanted it.

"Play us the old tunes, Sasha; play *Maroosia*, play *To Odessa we sailed on the sea.*" Sasha played that night all the old tunes.

The tavern became as of old.

But there was storm in the air. Every one was talking of revolution. Sasha began to play the *Marseillaise* again, and now with a different note from that in which he had played when friendship with France was being honoured. In came the police and stopped him. They forbade the playing of any Anthems whatsoever.

There was a *pogrom* in the town; hired ruffians appeared in the streets inciting the population to the murder of the Jews. Not once or twice Sasha himself was taken for a Jew and attacked.

Into the tavern came the same ruffians, and tried to stir up the drunkards to pillage and violence. Sasha was playing a tune of his own fancy when suddenly one of them, a converted Jew, jumped up and cried:

"The National Anthem! Brothers, the National Anthem in honour of our adored monarch. The National Anthem!"

"Anthem, Anthem," cried his mates.

"No Anthems whatsoever," said Sasha, repeating the words of the police-officer.

"What do you mean, you don't obey, you filthy Jew?" answered the man.

"And you?" said Sasha.

"I? What do you mean?"

"I'm a filthy Jew. All right, what are you?"

"I'm Orthodox."

"Orthodox! And for how much?"

The whole tavern laughed.

"Brothers," said the ruffian, "shall we stand the blasphemy of this Jew against Throne and Church any longer? . . ."

There was a rush at Sasha. But he jumped up, and lifting his fiddle in a rage, smashed it on the head of the first who came up to him.

So Sasha was arrested as a revolutionary, and once more he disappeared. This time every one thought he had gone for ever. It would have seemed proper to wear mourning for him. The tavern changed in atmosphere. In Sasha's place came another musician, one of those who had sat and listened to him in the old days and learned of him. One night, however, when they were playing the old tunes and the violin was gently crooning the song *Expectancy*, a voice from somewhere cried out nervously:

"Brothers, Sasha!"

All turned, and there stood the twice-raised Sasha, bearded, gaunt, and pallid. The people flocked around him and cried to him and called on him to play. But the same nervous, frightened voice cried out again: —

"His arm!"

All grew silent. Sasha's left arm hung broken and twisted and nerveless from his shoulder.

"What is it, brother?" asked one.

"Muscle dried up, that's all," he answered.

"So — o."

"Then that's an end to *Chaban*," said one of the crowd, referring to one of the most popular dances that Sasha played.

But Sasha took out of his pocket with his right hand a queer black wooden instrument which he had either made in prison or had had given to him, and he put it to his lips and began to play.

Then every one began to dance, and Sasha sat in his place, and all was as before. As Kuprin says at the conclusion of his tale, "Man is for Life, but Art is For Ever." [1]

Such is the orgy unrehearsed. So a tavern can be a popular theatre. It can also be a church, a place of searching after God. In England you sit down in

[1] From *Gambrinus*, Kuprin's Works, vol. iv.

church but stand in the public-house; in Russia you stand in the church but sit in the tavern; it humanises it, makes it more like a home, makes it possible for the tavern to be upon occasion a kind of church.

It is a great national assembly-place.

In Russia you are not allowed to hold a public meeting without the special authorisation of the police and the presence of a police-officer. But in the tavern is a great informal accidental meeting; and a great deal is enacted there that the police have no power to stop. Thus, for instance, in recent years several sects have used the tavern as the place for their prayer meetings, and have had something equivalent to a Salvation Army gathering, not "round the corner," but actually inside the public-house itself. The religious conspirators have come as it were accidentally, one by one, have ordered their tea, and have started an animated conversation into which, sooner or later, the whole houseful was drawn.

The most famous public-house in Moscow is the "Yama" (The Pit), in the street called Rozhdestvensky, a public-house which Tolstoy much wanted to visit, a tavern frequented not only by the common people but by scholars and seekers, especially by those who style themselves *Bogoiskateli*, seekers after God. Here appeared at times such well-known Russians as Solovyov, Bulgakof, Chertkof, Velikanof — it was the last who asked me to the "Yama," and

through whom I was able to hear a multifarious collection of the common people discuss religion and Russia and ghosts and the eternal questions.

From the "Yama" have sprung several interesting sects, for example, the *Bezsmertniki*, or deathless ones. Their doctrines, promulgated by a wretched consumptive who had both feet in the grave, was that it was possible to escape death. He held that health was faith in life, and that disease was faith in death. Death came simply from lack of faith. There were people living eternally but we did not know where to find them. The *Bezsmertniki* make pilgrimages to the East to seek those who have been living for ages. Alas! the founder died before the eyes of his followers. "He lacked faith," said they, and the new religion continued. One of the most ardent of them is a frequent visitor of the "Yama," Alexey Yegorovitch, a stocking-hawker.

So much trouble came from the discussions in the "*Yama*" that the public-house was closed by the Government. But as in the case of Sasha, so in the case of the "Yama" and the God-seekers. You can kill or mutilate the body, but you cannot kill the soul, the thing in itself. The "Yama," crushed in one tavern, broke out in another.

I visited the "Yama" one Sunday. It was resuscitated in the "Bay" public-house in Malo-Golovinskaya by the Candlemas Gate. We sat down in the

tavern at 12 o'clock, and over two glasses of tea talked for six hours and a half — our only other sustenance being occasional hot cabbage pies brought to us in trayfuls by a little serving-boy from the kitchen. The tavern swarmed with religious characters, home missionaries, propagandists, Bible-hawkers. There was a strong detachment of Old Believers; an old Baptist hawker of women's hose; many stall-keepers from Sukareva Market; Velikanof, a friend of Pereplotchikof; Victor Karlovitch, greasy and fat, who believes in evil spirits and feels attracted to Theosophy.

The talk went on evil spirits and was enlivened by many stories. A mad woman had been taken to the New Jerusalem monastery near Moscow, and had had a fit in church. After the fit she was found to be in her right mind, and it was said that the unclean spirit had been caught as it came out of her, and was now preserved in a jar of spirit and exhibited to pilgrims as one of the sights of the monastery. Were there evil spirits or were there not? Was it not said that they passed out of Legion into the swine? Did not the devils cry from the bodies of the insane, giving witness to Christ as He passed them by?

Velikanof told an amusing story of two peasants and a steam-engine. One of them held that it was an unclean spirit that made the engine go forward; the other said it was just steam, no more, he knew.

"It is an unclean spirit," the former repeated; "I'll bet it is an unclean spirit."

"How will you prove that it is?"

"I'll bet you a quarter the engine won't be able to pass the ikon of Mikhail the *Ugodnik*."

"Very well; done!"

The ikon was brought to the railway lines. Presently thrum, thrum, thrum, the post-train left the village railway station. The first peasant stood himself on the lines and held the ikon in front of him with both hands. The other stood by and watched. The train came on, but when the engine-driver saw the peasant barring the way and apparently flagging the train, he brought his machine to a standstill and cried out to know what was the matter.

"You see," said the peasant, "the engine dare not pass the ikon. The quarter is mine; let's go and have a drink."

Another visitor to the tavern told a sort of Ingoldsby legend of a ten-pound black cat whose favourite way of entering a house was by coming down the chimney. Another, a peasant workman, made the astonishing statement that if you make a candle from human fat and light it you can see *all*.

A long discussion was started on the difference between a man and an animal. The sole criterion set by Christ was, "By your fruits are ye known." A man is he who can sacrifice his life to an ideal. An

animal hungers and at once looks about to satisfy his hunger. But upon occasion a man says to his hunger, "No, I shall fast." A man feels blessed when he suffers for conscience sake, but no animal feels blessed through suffering.

A contrast was drawn between Napoleon and Christ. Christ was offered the empire and crown of the world and knew that in Himself He had the power to take it, but He preferred to deny the world. In that He showed Himself the highest type of man. They of the world nailed Him upon the Cross and cried up to Him, "Save yourself." He could have saved Himself, but He did not. He preferred to deny life. But Napoleon on the mountain fell down and worshipped Satan, and took for his portion the empire of the world. Napoleon was an animal taking what his stomach whispered to him.

The conversation went on — Russia's great destiny was to carry the banner of the ideal, to sacrifice the material ends of life for the mystical. "Directly you make a step nearer to God you become aware of contradictions in terms in the life you see about you; when you get really near to God you enter into such a maze of contradictions and paradoxes that it is almost too much for the human brain," said Velikanof, quoting from a book that was being widely discussed in Russia, *The Pillar and the Foundation of Truth*, by the priest Florensky. "It is for Russia to explore these contradictions and paradoxes."

"Russia has long dwelt in these paradoxes," said another. "Russia offers to the world glorious paradoxes: —

"As a substitute for success it offers failure.

"As a substitute for fine clothes it offers rags; and for fine mansions it offers taverns and log-cabins.

"As a substitute for rich men it offers beggars.

"Instead of the march music of Progress, it offers the choir dance of the Mystery.

"Instead of Progress itself it offers Communion."

I told them my belief that Russia is the hope of Europe, that we are all looking to her, that she is the living East, the pole of mysticism, in opposition to America, the living West, the pole of materialism. This pleased the *Bogoiskateli* very much. They made quite sure it was not simply a compliment, and then one of them added: —

"Yes, Russia is the hope of Europe, and Moscow is the hope of Russia." And another, an Old Believer, added to that: —

"And beyond the Preobrazhenskaya Zastava is the hope of Moscow" — it is there that the Old Believers have a vast and important settlement.

At half-past six the discussion broke up in the central part of the tavern and was left to be prolonged in separate groups. Perhaps later it again became general. I went out, and eight who accompanied me suggested that we go to another tavern two streets

off and drink another glass of tea. This we did, and the talk went on and on as it goes on every day and hour in Russia, in every town or village — talk about God and the idea of Christ and suffering, of what is necessary and what not.

Russia is considered a country where speech is not free, and, indeed, listening to such meetings as ours there are often plain-clothes detectives. But the police could no more stop the mouths of the Russian people or the current of popular opinion than they could drain or hide the water of the ocean. In the monastery hostelry, in the third-class waiting-rooms, in third-class carriages, in the muddy and crowded market-square, in the tavern, the Russian is always to be found eagerly asking, seeking, informing, emphasising, making points of exclamation. All priests, policemen, post office officials, schoolmasters, squires, commercial travellers, and Russian-speaking foreigners will bear witness to how they have been pestered with simple Russians asking for an explanation of passages in the Bible, or asking questions about God. So Russia shows herself alive. Even the taverns, in which there is so much drunkenness and debauch, the Russians have made into something like free churches or open debating societies.

VII

IN THE CHURCH

I HAVE been much struck with the many ruins of abbeys in England. There are many ruined abbeys that seem to need comparatively little restoration to make them great places of worship. Kirkstall Abbey outside Leeds, for instance, is a grand pile of stone, and has room for 1200 worshippers — but it remains little more than a curiosity and a questionable adornment of industrial Leeds. In Russia there are no such ruins. Throughout the wide stretch of Russia there is not a single Christian ruin. Christianity does not tolerate ruins. Kirkstall would never have been allowed to fall out of Christian service unless a heathen power like Turkey had gained possession of it. Russia, for instance, in 1875, coming into possession of the ruins of early Christian churches on the newly-acquired Caucasian shore of the Black Sea, at once set to work to restore them and to build new churches on the old holy sites. Kirkstall was built in 1152; it struck me, looking at it, that at their best the Russians of to-day are not un-

like the English Christians of that date. They have the characteristics of early Christian fervour.

The most representative cathedral of Russia is quite a modern one — that of St. Vladimir at Kief. It is much worth entering. A wonderful interior painted by the marvellous Russian painters, Vasnetsof and Nesterof — mediæval artists alive in the present, the eyes of the dead Middle Ages opening again after a thousand years' sleep. All the walls and the pillars of St. Vladimir are painted by these wonderful artists. At the north by the font is a vast representation of the birth of Russian Christianity, the stepping of the army of King Vladimir down into the waters of the Dnieper to their first baptism. And away high over the altar in a background of dark blue is painted Vasnetsof's majestical Mother and Child, whence naturally the congregation raises its eyes in adoration and aspiration. In the choir at the west is painted the story of Adam and Eve and their sin, and at the east is the wonderful Crucifixion and Resurrection, human birth balanced by spiritual birth, Paradise lost by Paradise regained. On the columns of the church are immense figures of the warrior-saints of Russia, the champions of Russian Christendom. When on Easter Eve this wonderful modern cathedral is full of all manner of Russians, you have a complete and national picture — another vision of Holy Russia. It is not necessary to pray or to fall upon one's knees. It is only

necessary to exist in the great choric throng and to look over a thousand heads to the awful and yet altogether lovely vision of the Virgin to feel one's heart almost stand still and one's soul become rapt in wonder, awestruck, thrilled. You wish to stretch arms above the head and give yourself completely to the spirit of beauty, the Godhead. You lose the sense of the Ego, the separated individual, you are aware of being part of a great unity praising God. You cease to be *man* and become the *church*, the bride of Christ.

The walls of all churches in Russia are painted all over with immense pictures. This is dimly thought by Western people to be in bad taste. But that is because the distance between the Western and Eastern churches of Christ is as yet unbridged. The Russian has the child-soul, the peasants get to heaven where we fail, because they are "as little children." And the children like the pictures. Older and more staid folk would not perhaps have thought of them. But they only need to go through the spiritual experience of praying in a Russian church surrounded by the painted cloud of witnesses to wish to be such children, and to feel that the child-idea of painting the walls with the pictures of the heavenly host is a perfect felicity.

The Eastern Church abhors dumb walls and the restriction of movement and attitude implied by pews. Every wall and every pillar is painted with pictures of the saints, and of incidents recorded in Holy Writ.

Walls, blank walls, are always in the nature of prison walls. They separate us from other people. But the Russian, by painting the walls blue and crowding them with the saints, imparts to them a character of infinity. He gives to the worship a background of eternity. He paints in the spiritual landscape of the church.

A great interpretive Russian writer [1] thus writes of the fresco and wall-painting: —

> In the West, where the Gothic arose, wall-painting naturally disappeared. There was no place for it on the arrowy columns and in the spaces between the windows. But in orthodoxy a continuous blank wall begged to be covered with painting. An ikon, a little picture in a square frame, was hung here and there, but still did not cover or give voice to the senseless walls at which the eyes of the worshippers gazed. In orthodoxy the wall must not be dumb, it must speak. But the wall cannot speak by texts — for which there are books. The people in the church ought to see themselves surrounded by holy scenes, pictures — of immense content and of immense dimensions. Such are frescoes. Only in orthodoxy are they possible, and indeed without them orthodoxy is dumb, powerless, not expressed. Thirst for such pictures among the Russian orthodox is great.
>
> Frescoes make the walls live. The soul poured forth on the walls calls to prayer, and says as much to the worshippers as does the reading and the singing in church, not less. . . . The worshippers feel around them the great background of historical Christianity. They not only hear but see — Chris-

[1] V. V. Rozanof, *Wall-Painting*.

> tian history, they not only hear but see — the story of salvation, they not only hear but see — the exploits of the martyrs, the suffering. . . . They see the pageant of orthodoxy, its splendid victories.
>
> The great difference between our immense wall-paintings and mere painting on canvas, the things that are exhibited in galleries and academies, is that the one is national whereas the other is only *personal*. Instead of nervous shrieking pictures, these minute creations which hang on academy walls, we have something eternal, everlasting, to which may bow their heads generation after generation, to which will pray one human family, another human family, another. . . .

This is an orthodox Russian's view of one of the characteristic features of his own church. To the Russian it means so much. But to one who has worshipped in both churches, and is speaking for those who for the most part pray in churches that have dumb walls, there is a great deal more to note and to follow up in the consideration of this most interesting new emblem in religion. Rozanof sets us on the high road for a fundamental understanding of Russian orthodoxy, and what I call the Eastern point of view in Christianity.

This praying in a church whose walls are "the great cloud of witnesses" is a portentous matter.

First of all, a word as to the *service* in a Russian church — the holy scene that shows itself if you go into vespers or matins, to a funeral or a wedding or a baptism, or a service for the remembrance of the

dead, or any of the numerous occasions of religious gathering. There are no pews, no chairs. There is always a crowd, a promiscuity of rich and poor, of well-dressed and tattered, a kaleidoscopic mingling of people and colours, people standing and praying, people kneeling, people prostrated, people pushing their way to the altar, people handing candles over one another's heads, people pushing their way out, churchwardens wandering about collecting alms, no irritation at the pushing, no anger through discomfort. The lights are dim, being mostly those of the worshippers themselves, of the candles they have lit before votive shrines. There is no organ music, but an unearthly and spontaneous outburst of praise from the souls of the choir and the clergy and the laity worshipping together. It is a strange and wonderful crowd where noble human faces, broad shoulders, and beautiful forms predominate rather than clothes or uniforms. No ranks of pews and people, no "man's order," only God's order, the varying and wonderful multitude. And from the back and the sides, and from the pillars and columns look the pale faces of antiquity, the faces of the dead who are alive looking over the shoulders of the alive who have not yet died, all praising God, enfolding in a vast choric communion the few who in the church have met on the common impulse to acknowledge the wonder and splendour of the mystery of God.

All the walls and the people and the priests are praising God. Whom do they praise?

Whom are we all praising? It is Some One or Something that has been praised for all time, and that will be praised for ever. Any narrow conception is necessarily wrong. It does not matter that many a worshipper has a low or superstitious idea of the God he worships. We are all comparatively narrow — even the widest-eyed of us. It does not matter that many deny intellectually that they are praising at all. We at least know by what we have heard, by bursts of universal praising borne in upon our ears, that all there is, is praising. That is one of the reasons why frescoes touch the soul, they remind us of a truth we know in ourselves that the face of every human being, good or evil, is turned towards God, as the flowers turn their blossoms to the sun.

Russia has her modern frescoes, for she has rediscovered the art of painting on wet plaster. She has also her ancient Byzantine frescoes — the expression of the early Church. There is something in them all that expresses the idea of choric praise, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Rozanof very suggestively remarks that archaeologists are poets, in that they turn their backs on present-day reality and go to live with a time a thousand or two thousand years ago, holding that time to be as great a reality as the present day. They realise that

the Past lives. We make a mistake when we talk of the dead past. It is a great religious truth that all that has ever lived lives for ever.

We are provincial dwellers in Time; we are, few of us, explorers, and many who do explore Time, explore it as moles do a field. We do not scan the vast stretch of Time from aloft. We are patient plodders, crawling on hands and knees and peering and poring over little plots of eternity. Few, very few of us, have the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling. But if we had the poet's eye and the poet's point of view we could see the *time-that-was* existent now, we could see it glowing and breathing and singing. We could see every event and circumstance in history — in living action, discharging itself and yet not getting discharged, rampant.

Keats, looking at the bas-relief on a Grecian urn, had the true poetic vision. He realised the ever-living quality of a moment of life poised in a picture. So he looked at the living groups on the ancient urn and sang: —

> What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
> What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
> What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

He looked at the Greek shepherds with their pipes and heard the liquid melody float away, and he cried: —

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on.

What enchanted the poet was that though the sculpture was all action, it was only a single moment. He felt that all was living, all moving, all processional; but that all was fixed. He saw the eternity in the moment.

> Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss
> . . . yet do not grieve;
> She cannot fade . . .
> For ever wilt thou love and she be fair!

He sees the trees whose leaves will never fall, and the spring which is an eternal spring.

A joy of art and of the eyes is the poising of a moment thus, and the showing in a sculptured relief or a picture or a poem all that was happening in the moment — the eternal life that the moment holds, the moment which we think passes, but which in truth never passes but ever is. We move past the landscape of Time and deceive ourselves that it is Time which passes us. It is we who pass by Time. The Time we have passed through remains. We can keep it in our view. We must go high into the heaven to see All-Time — nearer to God, nearer to the central sun of glory.

It is to take cognisance of the infinite breadth of Time, a richer knowledge than that on which we pride ourselves, knowledge of the length of Time. There is nothing more touching that one man can say to another than the recounting of all that is happening at one and the same time in the Universe. But speech and writing have one great lack. It is that we must spend

time to write and we must spend time to read. We must write one word after another, must read one word after another. But, joy of the artist! in a picture he can give an immediate impression of many things happening at the same time. The gazer at beauty has not to follow laboriously word by word and line by line and page by page to find out what all was happening at one and the same time; he sees it at once and takes it to himself at once in the painting. Especially in the fresco. He sees the breadth of Time shown in the breadth of the picture, and the multiplicity and variety in it.

So the sculptures and frescoes of the church touch the human soul. They are fragments of the breadth of Time, fragments of the pictures which Man writes on the breadth and surface of Time, fragments of the mystical "Garment" of which Goethe speaks. They are fragments of universal pictures, fragments of the picture of the Universe grouped about the feet of God. They have a choric and processional aspect. No matter what the figures in the fresco seem to be doing, they have the aspect of praising God, of being part of a choric universe.

Have we not noticed this in Nature, of which Art is the mirror. A dead man lying in an open coffin is like a piece of a fresco framed. The face of a dead man is a picture of a man going through a great gate. It has a grand processional look.

The roll of history itself is a long strip of fresco. It is only too narrow a strip. It is in the breadth of history that the beauty lies. If we could only see in poised moments all people and all nature praising God in all their various ways at one and the same time! That is the full roll of history — to see the broad eternity in each moment. To see that is to see the great phantasmagoria, the infinite blending of all shapes and colours, of all the runic and mystic manifestations which, seen in small, thrill us and puzzle us and perplex us in our mortal lives. It is also a vision of the Last Judgment. I often think in these days of accusing God and quarrelling with Providence it will not be God that judges us but we who give our judgment about Him. When the true and full vision bursts upon us, we shall all cry Hosanna unto the Highest. The whole universe seeing itself and understanding itself will burst into one great cry of glory.

How that could come about or what such a cry would mean is beyond thoughts and words. We cannot be literal about it, and yet we have sense of it, and are able to strike chords of the great harmony or catch glimpses of the symphonies of colour and form. The strange picture is miraged for us backward through Eternity and we catch glimpses of it. So it is in the Orthodox Church, in a crowd of pilgrims in a dim temple lit by the lights which the pilgrims themselves have lighted at the altars, enfolded in the great cloud

of witnesses we sing praises to the One, the Central One, the God of All.

There is nothing more wonderful than a real crowd, a crowd attracted by a personality or an idea. At interludes throughout history we catch glimpses of gazing crowds, the

> Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
> Man, brute, reptile, fly — alien of end and of aim —

that rush into sight at once as you name the ineffable Name.

The New Testament pictures of Jesus standing in the midst of the crowd is the symbol for all time of the Church, "Jesus teaching among the people, living in His heart the life of every one He saw, living from His heart in living veins over the whole earth, the thousand people about Him listening, calling, reviling, praying, the angelic spirits gazing at Him rapt, even the devils acknowledging Him from the bodies of the possessed, the disciples bringing sick people to and fro at the Master's feet." [1] This is just the same picture as the Russian Church presents to-day. It is the idea of that wonderful modern Russian painting, "Holy Russia," where Jesus walks out of the ikon frame and stands enhaloed above the crowd of all sorts and conditions of Russian men and women. It is the picture presented in the work of the great novelist, Dostoieff-

[1] "The Ikon not made by Hands," a Russian mystical story in *A Vagabond in the Caucasus*.

sky. Dostoieffsky's novels are pictures of great crowds of Russian men and women in the presence of the mystery of Love. Dostoieffsky's novel is a church, and in the church there is room for Raskolnikof, the murderer, and the little white-slave Sonia, room for the sick and the suffering and the lustful and the pure. And even the devils cry out from the bodies of *The Possessed*, acknowledging the Christ. Jerusalem of to-day with its thousands of poor Russian pilgrims and its crowds is such a church. Thither come not only the good and the respectable, but the outcast, the criminal, and the drunkard; there is room for them in the presence of the Sacred Face.

The little village church of any forest-side of Russia is also such a church. All Russia is such a church, and the world itself also, for every face is turned to one idea of God as the flowers are turned to the sun. Hence we sing most felicitously the Hymn of the Three Children, so popular in the early church, the *Benedicite Omnia Opera:*

O all ye Works of the Lord . . .
O ye Angels, O ye Heavens, ye Waters . . .
O all ye Powers of the Lord . . .
O ye winter and summer . . .
O ye mountains and little hills . . .
O ye children of men . . . ye priests of the Lord, ye servants of the Lord, ye spirits and souls of the righteous, ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

VIII

IN THE MARKET-PLACE

Moscow, *March* 1914.

WHAT a divine disorder! The peasants seem to have an instinctive sense for grouping. No matter how much the crowd moves or how many changes are evolved in it, it is always a beautiful whole, a fair scene, with balance of colour and form and sound. You see not a crowd but a nation. No wonder the Russian produces a ballet which is bewilderingly beautiful when the peasants are in their gait, are true to themselves and to their nation. What troubles the eye in a Western crowd is the fact that every one is afraid to be himself, to be true to personal impulses, and to walk and dress and act as he likes. Stupid censure and the criterion of convention robs our crowds of life, of diversity of colour and form. We in the West abhor a crowd as something disorderly in itself; we prize the drilled squad, where each and every soldier looks as if turned out from one and the same factory.

One of the most wonderful pieces of stage production in Moscow this year was Gogol's *Fair of*

Sorotchinsky presented at the New Dramatic Theatre, a picture of a Russian crowd and a market on a hill. The first scene shows a highway and an ox-cart laden with village girls and young peasants coming laboriously along it. They are on the way to the fair. The second scene, the fair itself, takes one's breath away. The sun is blazing with a ten o'clock in the morning full-armed effulgence, so that the bright cottons of the peasant women, the chestnut coloured sheepskins of the men, the ribbons hanging from the stalls, the black tangles of astrakhan hats, the trodden mud and puddles of the track all glitter like bunting on a May morning; and the tilts of the shop-tents and stalls ascend the hill one beyond another to the sky-horizon so that behind the foreground, where the action takes place, there rises a mountain of irregularly ribbed canvas. All manner of people float in and out of the colour design: flirting village girls wearing bright beads; stalwart yokels standing about in the mud with hayrakes in their hands; antediluvian monks with greasy tangled hair, with wrinkled and wise countenances, black and dirt-stained cloaks; tired pilgrims with huge bundles on their backs, wiping their sunburned brows with the backs of their grimy hands; beggars, drunkards. All the talking and bargaining and singing is allowed to mingle, and the customers stump about amongst the stalls and the piles of golden melons and brown pottery and

ask prices and haggle. And the little story of the play shows itself when the ox-cart of the first scene comes in with its burden of laughing girls and swains. Mardzhanof, the producer, does not allow the life of the fair in the background to slacken for a moment in order to emphasize the main story. He lets the fair be the world, which always goes on no matter what story is enacted upon it. Morning wears to noon, noon to afternoon and evening, and the ox-cart sets out again home.

Necessarily there is design in the kaleidoscope of the market as shown on the stage; but then the design is to show what a Russian fair is like, and this of Sorotchinsky is a wonderful representation of the Russian crowd. Every one who went to the performance was struck with the crowd, the way each small part was played by the actor and actress who had it. There was not one of the great troupe who simply walked on and filled a space; every one was realising a separate part. Such individual work was necessary if the psychology of the Russian crowd was in any way to be represented.

The market-place is more secular than the theatre, the church, or the tavern, and yet in it you see the same wonderful national idea (as Chesterton wrote of a similar idea, "It is as if we gazed long at a design full of disconnected objects, and suddenly they came together in a huge and staring face") — divine dis-

order, the disorder of the starry sky instead of man's order, instinctive mingling instead of ranks and pews, the live crowd instead of the dead crowd; or to translate the idea into political phraseology, true democracy instead of collectivism, the ballet of imagination rather than the regimental march of progress, human destiny as a mystery play rather than a problem play, enacted in a mysterious labyrinth rather than in a corridor of time or up and down an everlasting staircase of evolution.

IX

THE RUSSIAN IDEA

THOSE familiar with ideas can tell at sight a German idea, an American idea, a Russian idea, a Roman Catholic idea, and so on. Each nation has its fundamental idea, its mother idea, the idea of which all other characteristic ideas are children. As Dostoieffsky says: "No nation has ever been founded on science and reason; it has always grown about some central idea."

It is a remarkable fact that, although Russia is a great composite empire with an enormous number of small nations and tribes under her rule, she is not a country of mixed ideas. Her literature, art, music, philosophy, religion, her theatre, her dancing, is something intrinsically Russian. No Poles, Finns, Jews, Armenians, Kirghiz, contribute to it. No German-Russians contribute to it. Of all the names by which Russia is known as a nation mighty in art and in thought not one belongs to the subject nations. In literature — Dostoieffsky, Turgenief, Tolstoy, Gogol, Pushkin, Chekhof, Gorky, Balmont; in painting —

Vasnetsof, Nesterof, Verestchagin, Sierof; in music — Tchaikovsky, Korsakof, Mossugorsky; in philosophy — Solovyof; in history — Kluchevsky, Karamsim; in contemporary journalism — Rozanof, Menshikof, Doroshevitch, Merezhkovsky; even in Russian science, which is something apart from European science, Mendeleef, Metchnikof, all without exception are Russian names, the names of Russian people at once Christian and Slavonic. Nothing is contributed by Jews; nothing is contributed by Poles; nothing by Finns. These people each have their own characteristic separate literature and religion and art. They think in their own tongues, pray in their own churches, have their own characteristic ideas. There is not the blending we have in England, where we include in our national literature the works of, for instance, Disraeli, Zangwill, Conrad, Hueffer, and so forth, proud to be Jewish, proud to be Polish, proud to be German in extraction and yet speaking for England. The Russian idea is something purely Russian.

This is important not merely as a curious circumstance. It indicates the fact that the fundamental Russian idea should be something more easy to unravel, more evident, more mighty than other contemporary ideas. How much more easy, for instance, to determine just what is the national Russian conception of life than to determine ours, obscured and complicated by so many foreign elements.

There is a spirit abroad to-day which calls for the thing called cosmopolitanisation, in other words, for that process of the mongrelising of nations and ideas that is manifest to-day in America. It wishes the breaking down of national barriers — intermarriage. The doctrine seems to be promulgated chiefly by those Jews who have sold their priceless birthright, who have given up the Zionist ideal, and settled down to think that they are no longer Jews but Englishmen, Americans, Germans, what not. They talk of the United States of Europe, as if the United States of America were not sufficient of a problem and a muddle.

Russia is the strongest bond of nationality, being the purest and clearest of the nations. Germany, France, and England also tend to shake themselves free, and seek to find and to be themselves.

My quest at present is to unravel the Russian idea, and present Russia as she is in her spirit and her passion. By seeing Russia in this way we have a revelation of the majesty of a national idea. We obtain a notion how we should look if we could see ourselves as we really are.

Russia and England are akin, if it were only in the bond of Christianity. We have certain spiritual affinities. We could know ourselves much nearer to one another, though that depends on us rather than on Russia. She has much more to teach us than we have to teach her. It is only kindness to our poli-

ticians and progressive workers that could ever suggest that Russia was a blank sheet on which they might write what they chose. Russia, alas! may learn wrong things of us and go wrong — Dostoieffsky's nightmare. The noisy middle-class Russia of to-day does indeed tend to follow after other gods. But for the moment I cannot pause to give actual pictures of Russia going wrong. I am in quest of the vital and fundamental idea of Russia, that which is the mother of her art, literature, music, of her religion and her traditional national life.

I am tempted to say that the Russian idea is an aspect of Christianity. Hence the title of this book, *The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary*. Russia is the fairest child of the Early Church. Her national idea is identified with one of the Byzantine aspects of Christianity. But it would be impossible to deny that Russia draws her marvellous spirit from something earlier than Christianity. There is Nature-worship in the Russians; there is Scandinavian mythology; there is Oriental mysticism. The remote past still lends impulses of passions, dreams, fears, hopes, to the rustling and blossoming present. Yet all its past has been absorbed into Russian Christianity, though Russians have not yet explored and reproduced in art all the significances of that mysterious time in Russian history. We may say that the Russian idea is a Christian idea. Christianity has been great enough

to include and say *yes* to all that was wonderful in the old.

What then of Russian ideas? Of the Russian idea?

When you first step into a Russian novel you come across symptomatic ideas, and when you go into Russia you find them again in the life of the people. Probably the most obviously characteristic thing is the love towards the suffering, pity. Russia is a remarkably tender and comforting nation. She is greatly concerned with her neighbour, and her heart is touched by his destiny. As Rozanof writes:

> Is there one page in the whole of Russian literature where a mock is made of a girl who has been betrayed, of a child, of a mother, of poverty? Even the thief is an honest thief. (Dostoieffsky's *Honest Thief*.) Russian literature is one continuous hymn to the injured and insulted. And as of such people there must always be a multitude in vain and gigantically-working Europe, it is possible to imagine the shout of joy which breaks forth when they are shown a country, a whole nation, where no one ever dare offend the orphan, the destitute, in the moral sense never dares to look insultingly upon the person left forlorn by circumstance, by destiny, by the break up of life. Of such people there are only too many. And what can the "kings" of Victor Hugo say to them, or in general, the manifestly artificial subjects of Western writers? Russian stories can give consolation. For besides being taken from the habitual common everyday life they have a tenderness. The Western man can say: "There is a country where I should not have been despised; there is a country where I should not have been so coarsely insulted, where every man would have taken my part and inter-

ceded for me, where they would have taken me by the hand and raised me upon my feet again. I am cursed, but only in my own country, not on the whole planet."

That is the effect of Russian literature. Its significance is not a matter of the reviews of Western critics, not a matter of the noisy fame which has overtaken it; it lies not in its material triumph, but in a direct and absolutely unhampered affinity to the soul of the simple and universal reader. To some the Russian song is always pleasing. . . . No, — bigger, better. There are souls to whom the Russian song is the one thing necessary in life, to whom it is dearer than anything else in life — as to the hurt one, his mother; as to the sick child, again his mother, perhaps neither a beautiful nor a virtuous one. Virtue — it is of course somewhat strange to ask virtue from Russians. . . . "The Troika." . . . But one thing there always is in Russia — sympathy, responsiveness. Perhaps it sprang up in Russia, and became exaggerated there just because so many people were crushed by various "troikas." However that may be, to be sung to sleep with Russia's cradle song many wish. . . .

There is love towards the suffering one. It is part of a love towards the destiny of the individual. There is a remarkable absence of conventional standards. You are not looked at askance because you seem poor. The tramps and pilgrims on the road are never made ashamed of themselves. A contrast to America, where the tramp is an object of mirth, where he is regarded almost as an enemy of society. The Russian takes the tramp in. He has real hospitality, and not only hospitality of hearth and home, the giving of food and a night's shelter, but also a more vital hospitality,

that of mind and heart. He wants to know all about you. He asks you the human questions. He asks about father and mother and brothers and sisters, about your home and your calling and your goal. In return he tells you the intimate things of his life.

This is not only a matter of the road. How often the most utter stranger, met in a railway carriage or a post-station or at an inn, will after a remark about the weather or the crops begin to tell you the whole story of his life. He assumes the hospitality of your heart; a sure sign that in general people's hearts are hospitable, that in general there is a love towards destiny.

As a wanderer and a seeker I have myself experienced the ordinary material hospitality of hearth and home, and also this of the heart, having often been poor, strange-looking, and enigmatical enough. Russians have not looked askance; they have been brotherly. They have accepted a stranger naturally and simply as they would one near to themselves. More than that, knowing that I had a special quest, there have always been those who came forward and helped me in the spiritual things. Mysterious beings have, as it were, anticipated my coming, and have stepped out and recognised and said: "Read this; go to that one and talk to him; see this Russian picture." They love to preserve the mystery too. I have known people who had the aspect of having dreamed of my coming.

The first day I was in Vladikavkaz an old tatterdemalion standing by the bridge over the Terek came forward to embrace me and welcome me in the name of God. I had never met him before; I knew no one in the town. When I left Vladikavkaz last, to make my long and possibly dangerous Central Asian tramp, the most mysterious of my friends brought me a beautiful little copy of Nesterof's Martha and Mary to keep me from harm. And one night, months later, in a remote Moslem town on the fringe of the desert, I had a strange experience of adventure and terror, when, as it seems to me, I was literally saved by looking at the picture. The giving of it was love towards destiny, hospitality of the heart.

It might be thought, however, that the Russian love stopped short with the honest, the religious, the seeking — that as long as a man could give a decent explanation of himself and his mode of life the Russian was on his side. But that would be to miss the real saliency of this love. The Russian loves the dishonest, the criminal, the despicable, the unpleasantly strange, the man who can give no explanation of himself, as much as she loves the other, even a little more than she loves the other; she has a "weakness" for the prodigal. Half her novels are expressive of love towards "criminals."

In English novels the plot is so adjusted that the author has scope to make a thorough out and out

condemnation of the villain. He has a few pages where he lays himself out to show how inexcusable the villain's conduct was, what an abject scoundrel, what a disgraceful creature he is. The condition on which you may describe sin is that you condemn the sinner. In life also, as well as in literature, we are condemnatory; we love to pass judgment on others. How different in Russian literature! You find no condemnatory spirit there. The author's whole passion is to defend and explain the criminal, to evoke the tender sympathy of the reader. He makes you feel how strange, how pathetic, is man's destiny, how sordid his life compared with his spirit. Over the portal of Russian life and literature you might find the motto, "Neither do I condemn thee." Russia feels that however mean, however ugly and strange a man's life may seem, it is nevertheless a part of his great pilgrimage. He has got to go through it, he is learning something thereby, fulfilling something sacred thereby. This is exemplified very remarkably in Russia's legal system, where, for instance, there is no capital punishment except under martial law. A man commits a murder, but he is not therefore condemned and hanged and turned over to God; he gets merely a dozen years in Siberia, and he goes on with his life.

Dostoieffsky, when he was in Siberia with forgers and murderers and highwaymen, was much concerned to seek out the gold in their character; and he re-

marks how a violent and dangerous man will even shed tears at the sight of a child suffering. "Murderers are much more simple than we take them to be," says he in another place, "so are we all."

The Russians are unashamed. Men and women confess voluntarily to having committed crimes or behaved abominably upon occasion. The man who lives an immoral life does not do so secretly to his wife. The black sheep of the family is not hidden in the background, "never mentioned," or subscribed for and sent to a distant colony; he is sitting at the table and is quite cheerful, and every one takes him for granted. No one is ashamed to borrow or to be tremendously in debt; no one horror-struck at the idea of visiting the pawn-shop. All which exemplifies the love towards individuals and individual destiny.

This is why Russia is so free. It is almost a platitude to say that conventions determine the extent of personal freedom much more than the laws of the realm or the behaviour of the police. Yet it is a fact lost sight of when people talk of tyrannous government. In Russia love is towards the individual much more than towards the State. There is indeed no particular love towards the State. We British uphold the State; to us the police and the police-system are almost sacred. We often condemn individual behaviour in the name of the State. We abhor "shirkers," "rebels," "breakers of the peace." Hence our comparatively

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limited British freedom. We believe in order. Our freedom is freedom within bounds. We allow ourselves to be disciplined along definite lines. In Russia it is different. There freedom often amounts to chaos. Even Russian order, *poryadok*, that which comes from Petrograd, is something borrowed from Germany to keep the nation together. Russians have no instinct for order. Watch our best British troops marching — they give you the idea that each soldier has been turned out from a factory, and is of one and the same type and size. They march like moving patterns. But the Russians march any way; their order is of the lowest kind. It is even tolerated to have wives and mothers marching in the ranks with their husbands and sons, carrying their bundles. Some men are marching; others are running. Each man has his own individual expression in his countenance; he has not merely a regimental expression. Russia does not care for ranks, for blocks of houses, for formal gardens, for churches with pews. She likes the individual to do as he pleases. Hence a divine disorder, a glorious promiscuity. The church perhaps shows the quickest picture of national life — the kaleidoscopic mingling of people and colours, the wonderful crowd encompassed by the frescoed walls, the faces of the saints, the great cloud of witnesses.

The same picture, though modified by Western influence, is shown in the theatre. Russia wishes

the disenchanting of the footlights, the participation of the public in the action of the drama, the removing of stalls and chairs — a divine disorder in the theatre. She believes in the emotional communion of the theatre — the actors inspired by the people, the people inspired again by the actors, the dance and interplay of human thoughts and emotions. Shut your eyes to the material world and you realise there are no footlights, no separating river of light between the two worlds of stage and auditorium. There is a great and wondrous ballet of thoughts and impulses, hopes and fears, going forward and across and backward and across again between the priests of the drama and the conspirators, the worshippers.

The church service and the drama, the church and the theatre have much in common. The Mass has much in common with the mystery play. And the mystery play was originally the Mystery — at which you did not look, but *into* which you were initiated. You participated in the action. You were the victim sacrificed, or the priest, or one of the conspirators in the orgy. You were made one in the sacrifice, as in the Mass you are made one in the sacraments of bread and wine, symbols of the victim. Share is taken in the sacrifice, we consent unto the death. We are made one. We get free from the idea of separation, from space and time, realising the everywhere-here, the eternal present.

In such a form is the Russian notion of the world and his conception of life. It is such a church, such a theatre, such a mystery play. It has its liturgies of beauty, its many processions, its sacrifices, its ecstasies; it is a great phantasmagoria of emblems. Nothing is without significance; every man has his part; by his life he divines it and fulfils it. Every common sight and sound is charged with mystery. Everything is praising, everything is choric, everything triumphant.

To recapitulate and restate this in aphorism: Russian life is remarkable by virtue of its love towards the suffering, towards the individual destiny; by the absence of condemnation; by faith in life even if life should express itself in meanness, sordidness, crime; a feeling for the pathos and wonder of life as exemplified in the individual; no love towards "the State" or man's order, but great love towards the individual and individual instinct; a consequent freedom, amounting at times to seeming chaos, a divine disorder such as the disorder of the starry sky, as opposed to man's order, say the order in which stars might be classified in a book; a disorder such as that of the flowers and shrubs of the forest, rather than order as in a formal garden; a belief, then, in instinctive genius and divination by impulse of one's place in the kaleidoscope of existence.

With such natural disorder comes an incapacity for "discipline," "efficiency," "progress." Life is a mystery play.

Whence may be inferred the following differentiation of ideas:

Instead of the God of the ten commandments, and the consequent ten condemnations, the Russian acknowledges the God whose service is perfect freedom.

Instead of the simplification of life, a love of its complexity. The Russian says "yes" to the multiplicity of doctrines; he does not wish personal destinies to be unravelled and straightened out by the State, standardised and guaranteed by the State. He will not reduce the chess of life to the draughts of life. A religious belief in pure democracy; no belief in Socialism.

Instead of belief in the Future, belief in an eternal Present.

Instead of life understood as a march, life understood as a ballet.

Instead of life understood as Evolution, life understood as a marvellous phantasmagoria.

Instead of Time understood as a passage or corridor, Time as a labyrinth.

Instead of the world-ideal of garden cities and carefully planned parks and squares, a belief in the maze of the world.

Instead of a belief in the coming of universal peace, a belief in the recurrence of wars. No belief in the "making virtuous of the world and all people."

No belief in any explanation as sufficient.

No prejudice against impossibilities; a cheerful acceptance of miracles, infractions of the "laws of Nature," of the significance of dreams and visions, of the design of destiny hidden in apparent accident; a predisposition toward superstition.

A belief that in apparent failure lies a truer destiny than in apparent success.

A saying "yes" to the mysteries of the Birth, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ. The West would take Christ down from the cross, heal His wounds, and save Him. The East would not do that. She knows that she must crucify Him.

X

THE LABYRINTH

MAN is a labyrinth. He is masked, and there are masks over masks. When you have gone past his first surface you come to a second. He is like thousands of overpainted frescoes. His soul is a mystic temple with a hundred and a thousand standing-places further forward or further back. His soul circulates in passages, hides in caves or recesses, is missed among intricacies or complexities. It has the power of metamorphosis and can lurk in the by-ways of his being in strange guise. It manifestly takes possession of his body, or it dwells in dim caves and recesses, or marches soundingly along corridors; it creeps insidiously through secret mazes; it dwells lingeringly in empty chambers, makes its exit stealthily by little doors leading as it were to vast reservoirs; or hurriedly it traverses many apartments to look from the outmost gate like a newly risen moon. It is sometimes enthroned like a king or a queen, or descending from the throne trails long robes over marble. Or it is abased to a slave or a prisoner and is confined

in towers and dungeons serving tyrants for unknown ends; or it lies stretched on couches, in trances, overcome in chambers of voluptuousness, escaping again and again from the spell of enchantment and the stress of tyranny, from would-be masters too weak finally to enthral. There are issues of joy from many passages of pain. There are processions in the temple of the soul; and sometimes the soul is a victim bound to be sacrificed in honour of some conqueror, or it is the priest at the altar, or the conqueror-god to whom sacrifice is made. The sense of destiny in the soul may rise to a majestic height of godhead, or may be extinguished to the dull inanition of the worm or perverted to the fury of a devil. But even lying at great depths and in great darkness it sees the eternal stars, as the stars are seen even in the glare of the Egyptian noonday from the innermost chambers of the pyramids. It becomes upon occasion an enchanter, an Ariel who can summon fairies and sprites with pageants and choruses, and make heavenly music in every passage and turn and cranny in the great labyrinth of man's being.

There are many labyrinths. Squares and circles and straight lines are in themselves lies — they are disjointed fragments of labyrinths. There is no truth in them until they are pieced together. A labyrinth is something which cannot be drawn by mathematical instruments, which cannot be photographed. It can

be sensed, it can be conveyed to the mind by music, by a certain sort of impressionism in writing and painting. We have knowledge of the labyrinth of the world because our body and soul and being is a labyrinth, and part answers to part. We understand such music with our whole bodies, not only with our ears; we see such pictures with the soul itself, which is all eye, rather than with the mere physical eye. It is truth — heavenly harmony.

A paragraph of good writing is a labyrinth: it is comprised in one breath, and mirrors in its construction the natural stops and alleys of the body. Every fruit is a labyrinth.

All disorder is a divine order not understood: the order of the labyrinth, the disorder of the starry sky, the disorder of the forest, the disorder of the world, of a nation, of the web of intricacies on the palm of a hand.

All astronomy, astrology, geography, cosmography, botany, natural history, palmistry are more or less the tracing of the lines of the labyrinth, our playful attempts to follow out the mystical maze of natural phenomena.

The lines which men trace in their goings to and fro upon the world are part of the mystical tracery, so also are the tracks of the clouds, the outlines of coasts, the ramifications of the lines of rocks.

Reflections of the labyrinth are caught in many curious pictures and patterns: in the design on butter-

flies' wings, the markings on plumage, the lines and mottling on birds' eggs, the frosting on the window-pane.

All the rest of nature seems unconscious of it; but we men are half conscious, and pause and stare continually at what we call astonishing or curious or wonderful things. Our life is a life of lisping and marvelling. Every thrill is the accompaniment of a perception of part of the labyrinth; death itself is our greatest thrill, and is perhaps the necessary phenomenon of fuller initiation.

II

MARTHA AND MARY

I

THE *PODVIG*

RUSSIAN Christianity is sharply in contrast with Western Christianity in the characteristic idea of denial of "the world," as opposed to our Western idea of accepting the world and "making the best of it." An essential idea in Russian Christianity is denial of "the world," denial of this mortal life as real life, denial of material force as real force, denial of speech as real speech. An act of denial is called a *podvig*, and a man who does some great act of denial is called a *podvizhnik*.

The act of Jesus on the mountain denying the road that led to the empire of the world in favour of the road that led to an ignoble death is a *podvig* — denial of the world.

"Turning the other cheek" is a *podvig* — denial of material power.

Going two miles with the man who forces you to go one is a *podvig*.

Mary, breaking the precious box of alabaster which might have been sold in aid of the poor, accomplished a *podvig*.

Simon Stylites, standing on the pillar when he might have been doing "useful work in the world," was a *podvizhnik.*

The hermits of the Thebaid were all doing *podvigs* — renouncing the world.

Father Seraphim, who took an oath of silence and was silent thirty-five years — proving in himself that silence was golden — accomplished a great *podvig.*

It is difficult in Russia to carry on a discussion of any point of religion without coming to a consideration of this idea of the *podvig.* For instance there is a saying in Russia, "Blessed is he who can escape and yet chooses to take the punishment the world would give him." A story is told in Russia that when Jesus was stretched on the cross many of those who had accepted his doctrines were in great distress not knowing that this had got to be; but they said among themselves, "You will see: there will be a miracle. I wouldn't be in the place of these stupid and brutal Roman soldiers for worlds. You will see He will step off the cross, and amaze and conquer the world." And in their anxiety and excitement they cried out: "Save thyself." Pessimists whispered to one another sad thoughts, "Alas, alas! has it not always been so in the world's history; mankind has stoned the prophets of God. Now He is going to die, to perish miserably, and the whole new movement will be ruined. People who never saw Him work

miracles will say He was a charlatan, and that He never had any mission or any power. But we who saw Him raise the dead know He has the power to save Himself." But both the optimists and the pessimists were wrong. They did not realise that the Man on the Cross was giving the lie to the reality of death and to the material power of the Romans and the Jews. The giving the lie is the *podvig*.

That strange German fairy tale of the three sluggards is probably taken from conquered Slavs. There lies in it something of the Russian point of view. The old king gave his kingdom to the son who would not save himself from the gallows tree, even though a knife were put into his hand to cut himself down. The German version is that the king gave the throne to the laziest of the three, but in reality he gave it to the one who was most capable of denying the world.

Dostoieffsky had a habit of saying that he was glad to have gone through penal exile in Siberia, and he felt that those revolutionaries who fled abroad and did not accept the worldly judgment and punishment meted out by the Russian court were not true to Russian ideas and not in reality helping Russia. He would have preferred that they accepted the cross which Russia put upon them. Dostoieffsky constantly refers to himself as a slice from the loaf of Russia, a slice from the communion loaf — a share in the sacrifice. Those who flee from punishment are outside the

communion, they have no real portion in Russia. "The religion of suffering" does not mean "suffering for its own sake," but rather the religion of not avoiding suffering, not avoiding or trying to avoid destiny. The religion of the *podvig*.

A tempter once came to a hermit living in a cave, and told him about the pain and misery and poverty of his fellow-men living in the world, and asked him what he would do if a million of money were brought to his cave and put at his disposal. The hermit crossed himself and muttered, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" The tempter was annoyed and urged his point. "But what would you do?" he asked.

"I should not alter my way of life," said the hermit.

That was a *podvig*, a denial of the reality of misery on earth, a denial of the power of money to gain real happiness for man.

One of the most interesting of Russian mystery plays, Andreief's *Anathema*, is concerned almost wholly with this idea. A man after God's own heart succumbs to the temptation of thinking he can put the world right with money. He inherits a million from a relative who has died in America, and he sets to work to alleviate human suffering. But the more suffering he tries to remedy the more appears before him, till finally he is drowned in suffering, and God says to Human Reason, "Not by these measures shall it be measured, nor by these numbers shall it be counted,

nor by these weights shall it be weighed, O Anathema, dwelling among numbers and measures, and not yet born into light!"

This idea is so pervasive, so characteristic, that I would call it an extra letter in the alphabet of Russian philosophy.

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The history of literature is the history of ideas.

Man first made sounds to represent elementary ideas such as hunger, cold, warmth, danger, death. Then he made signs to represent sounds, and invented reading and writing. The signs were systematised; they were split up into letters and then remade as words. Alphabets and dictionaries were made. Languages grew.

At first people spoke only of hunger, cold, pain, pleasure, fighting, death, and such simple things. They had perhaps only five hundred or so words. But year by year they added to words as they discovered new things in the world and in themselves.

At first clever men, brave warriors, intrepid hunters gave us words; then philosophers and astrologers and historians; then priests and minstrels and poets. They named all the things on the world and their feelings about the things; they named the ideas for which men fought, for which tribes and nations fought. They named the things of which they were afraid, the

evil spirits in the darkness, in the forests, in the earthquakes and tempests. Last of all, when they found and considered the great spirit of man, the spirit in themselves, they named the gods, and they named the transcendental glories and sorrows of man.

The minstrels struck their harps and sang of the great deeds of famous men, and then poets without harps wrote of the same deeds, changing into words the music of the harp as well. Priests burned sacrifices on altars, and the poets wrote of it and changed the smoke of the incense into words. Great warriors fought before Troy, and the poets changed their passion into words. They sailed the terrible seas ten years to get homè, and the poets changed the storms into words. The poets found out the assonances of mankind, what every one admired, and they gave to whole generations watchwords, words that were battle-flags. The poets described the gods.

Poems were so much read that whole lines and verses were as familiar as ordinary words, and people could quote a line of poetry and everybody would know the idea that was meant. And when the name of a god or a hero was mentioned there rose at once to people's minds stories about him, poems about him.

Stories became like extra words in the language. That is what the wonderful Greek stories such as those of Narcissus, Demeter, and Persephone, and the labours of Hercules became — extra words in the

dictionary, or, better still, extra letters. For simple people took them into their lives, and combined them with their own thoughts, and made new words of their own. People learnt to use these stories in their prayers and in all their thoughts of mankind.

Some nations, like the Jews, the Egyptians, the Greeks, grew to great culture, and the peoples in their beautiful capitals struck thousands of harps and sang thousands of songs, whilst away in the backwoods and lost places of the world the rest of mankind lived almost inarticulate, almost like beasts, — in Germany, in Gaul, in what is now Russia, in Britain. But their upward movement was at hand. A new idea came into the world and all the old order changed, giving place to new. The last of the stories which became a word was the story of Christ on the cross. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." An extraordinary new letter was given to the world, and people fitted it into their thoughts and made new words, new languages, new cultures.

The savage races of Western Europe came turbulently to the knowledge of the God-like in themselves, and threw the world into confusion, observing the old words and stories and culture of the ancient world. They followed the word-flags of Christianity, the watchwords. Once more the making of language was first in the hands of clever artificers, brave warriors, intrepid hunters, adventurous sailors. It passed

into the hands of mediæval philosophers, alchemists, and scholars, to minstrels, priests, and poets. At last they realised a wide and wondrous culture, and they took from the ancient world all the stories and extra words and letters now called myths, and they added them to their own stories and words, as one might add strings to a stringed instrument. They learned to praise God on many strings.

To-day we express ourselves with great orchestras, as formerly, long long ago, man emerging from the animal, the rude Pan, learned to express himself on a simple reed.

The discovery of words has been the history of self-expression. Words have no value in themselves. They are symbols or tokens of ideas in us. And when we find words continually adding themselves to our vocabulary and our culture, we know ourselves increasing in the knowledge of ourselves and of the beauty and passion which lie latent in our souls. Education in its highest sense is the learning of words and the learning how to use them, learning the notes of the great instrument, learning how to play the music of the ages, and to express with that music and with that playing the passion and the mystery of our own souls.

The highest of literature, like the noblest of music, is that wherein the great stories are used as extra letters and words. Rich writing is that which is full

of allusions which we all understand. Poor literature is often that in which the author is frequently making allusions to events and stories which are known only to a few and have no strong significance. To use stories as words when the majority of people do not know the stories is to write in a language that is not understood, it is to write in words that are not in use. The reality of a book that draws its allusions from the Bible and from the Greek myths and general European history is immeasurably greater than one that is constantly referring to the Koran or the stories of the Buddha or Zoroaster or Khrishna or Confucius. That is in itself an adequate defence of Christianity as a religion for us. Its stories are our stories. Its Word is the living Word. The other stories are not our stories. Christianity is our language. If ever asked to defend Christianity, the defence lies not in the historical accuracy of Christian documents or the verity of records. Christianity is the *Word*. All words are at our disposal for the expression of our passion and the sense of our mystery. The Christian story is the word that fits.

Our golden deeds, the deeds we consider as golden, are our extra letters. Let the poets and musicians blend them into their music. Every time a golden deed is made to sound beautifully in allusion a common chord is struck in the souls of men.

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And the *podvig* is an extra letter. There are many who claim that it is the word itself; that denial of "the world" is actually the *logos* of Christianity. Even in Russia, where there is also the richer and grander conception of the church, there are those who stand for the *podvig* only, for denial of the world and material force only. Witness Tolstoy and many of his followers. It is even held by some that the whole of true and vital and historical Christianity is founded on — "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." The important sect of *Skoptsi* go so far as to say that the begetting of children is sin, and they mutilate themselves, and in that way deny life in the name of the spiritual life.

II

THE HERMITAGE OF FATHER SERAPHIM

THINKING of the *podvig*, I made a pilgrimage to the hermitage of Father Seraphim, a few hundred miles from Moscow.

Over treeless wastes and desolate commons, where far-away churches on the sea of snow look like ships sailing under full canvas; through snow-blown forests of pines, through woods of tall birch trees; very seldom past villages or human beings — to the holy city of Arzamas in the Government of Nizhni-Novgorod. A night in an inn among the many churches of Arzamas, and then on the road across fifty miles of desolate snow-covered moor that lie between the city and the great monastery. I hear of the terrible hurricane that has swept southern Russia, and the flood that has drowned hundreds of poor fisher-folk and workmen on the shores of the Azof. To-day there is bad weather all over Russia. It is ten degrees colder, it still snows, and a high easterly gale is blowing up the fallen snow and the drift-tops and drift slopes in blinding clouds that look like engine smokes and volumes of vapour. A bitter day.

There are no pilgrims on the way, the weather is too heavy for them. Often as you stand and try to go forward over the uneven road, the wind sets you sliding backward on the clumps of ice, and you suddenly blunder into two feet of soft snow. You come to little cottages on the Sarof side of which stand drifts higher than the cottages themselves; they look like cliffs, and the snow blowing off unceasingly and tempestuously above the cottage roofs looks like long white grass going in all directions at the sport of the gale. In the afternoon the snow ceases to fall from the sky, but it still rises in smokes and sprays over the rolling plains. Far away on the horizon to which I am journeying the black line of the wolf-haunted forest is visible. At night I sleep in a peasant's hut, on felt spread on the floor. A whole family goes to sleep in the same room, and as I lie stretched flat on this primitive couch, resting my weather-beaten limbs, each of the others says his prayers before the many ikons. There are many ikons in the room, and besides them, holy oleographs enough to give the idea that the bare wooden walls have been papered on some religious design. Chief among the pictures is a representation of the Tsar and the Grand Dukes giving their shoulders to the triumphal carrying of the relics of the Father Seraphim, on the occasion of the canonisation of the Russian hermit and *starets*.

Father Seraphim was a saintly monk and ghostly counsellor of the type of Father Zosima, familiar to English readers of *The Brothers Karamazof*. He accomplished extraordinary holy exploits during his youth and middle age, conquering the flesh and denying the world, and in his old age became famous for his godly sagacity and humility. When he died his body was reputed to have in it holy charm, and thousands of peasants brought their sick and their blind, and their sins and their sorrows to the miracle-working relics. Finally the Empress, wishing to have a male child, abode at the monastery and prayed, and Father Seraphim gave Russia a Tsarevitch. The Tsar named Seraphim as a saint, and the shrine of Sarof, already astonishingly sought of pilgrims, gained a great ecclesiastical distinction. Hence this grand oleograph on the wall.

I slept as one sleeps who, after weeks in town, is one day surcharged with open air. Next morning the whole family was up before dawn, and the samovar was on the table in the grey light of sunrise. A man from the village decided to accompany me to Sarof.

"Haven't been there for four years," said he, "and now I'm homesick to see it again. I think I'll go and pray a little."

We talked of Father Seraphim on the way.

"Is the cell still there where he fed the bear with bread?" I asked.

"Yes, it's there; about five versts from the monastery away in the woods. There is a shrine there now. You'll see the stone, too, on which he prayed a thousand days and a thousand nights without moving away. And the spring that he found. Many people have been cured there. It's quite unusual water. Will you bathe?"

"Perhaps," said I. "But the weather's cold."

"No one ever takes cold there," said the peasant. "It's quite safe. The water is very very cold. But there's something about it. You take it home, it doesn't go bad like ordinary water."

"He was a great saint, this Father Seraphim!"

"Of course; he was a God-serviceable man, he did many *podvigs*."

When we arrived at the monastery in the holy wood we were accommodated in a cell, and a novice brought in the samovar at once. No passports were required, no charge was made. We found at the monastery some two or three hundred other pilgrims, most of whom had been there several days. A pleasant collection of churches, hostelries, little shops, and worksheds set on a fair hill among ancient pines, a peaceful shelter and sanctuary after the wild weather and desolation of the moors. We wandered about the buildings in the dusk, listened to the antique chimes, and then returned to sleep a few hours before the midnight bell to the first service of the morrow. About

one in the morning we left our cells and all muffled up and mysterious followed other pilgrims across the soft new snow to the door of the Cathedral of the Assumption. Then in the witching hour of night we entered the church — such an immense church it seemed, barely lit by the few struggling tapers, and we such a few people in it. The peasants, however, paid no attention to numbers, and they stood and prayed and crossed themselves and gave the responses for hours and hours, at last receiving the blessing of the priest, kissing the cross in his hand, being marked on the brow with holy water, stepping up to the altar and kissing through a hole in some canvas a part of the remains of the saint. There was nothing touching in the service except the demeanour of the pilgrims, no music worth mentioning. Our leaving our beds to come and stand for hours on the Cathedral floor without an inclination to shirk or go out was a *podvig* — an inbred part of the Russian character now.

I went to a fuller service later in the day, in a church much more alight with candles, taken by a deacon with a deep spirit-summoning voice, and mellowed by wonderful choral accompaniments, a long service requiring patience from the aged folk who came to take part in it.

A seventy-five-year-old dame explained in one of the monastery dining-rooms, as some twenty of us with wooden spoons sat round four huge Russian

basins of soup and helped ourselves together — "I felt I might die before it ended, but I prayed to the holy *Ugodnik*, Father Seraphim, to ask God to give me strength to stay till the end of the service."

"Why not to God direct?" I asked.

"It's not for a poor creature like me to trouble God to attend to me," said she. "No, I ask the *Ugodniki*, if they have time, to go to Him and ask Him at a convenient moment. . . ."

"As to the Tsar," said some one.

"But God has time for every one," said another, "and can attend to everything at once. . . ."

"*Pozhalui*, I suppose so . . ." said the old woman meekly in a cracked voice, and went on with her soup.

I talked with one of the monks about Father Seraphim. What a character the Russian hermit was; there is material in his life for the pen of another Carlyle writing a new Past and Present. He was silent all those thirty-five years, and then opened his mouth. Alas! no one could tell me the first words that he spoke. He was actually silent all the time that Napoleon was ravaging Russia, during the time when he was in occupation of the holy mother of Russian cities, Moscow. Napoleon was popularly understood in Russia as Antichrist, and when the news of the terrible French sacrilege spread over Russia there were all manner of extravagant rumours about the end of the world.

By this time Seraphim had obtained a name of great sanctity. Sick men had been restored to health by drinking from the hermitage well, the leprous had discharged their disease by touching the garments of the holy but silent man. So when Napoleon came to Moscow, the crowd appealed to Seraphim to work a miracle.

"They are burning our sacred shrines," they cried, "they are using our cathedrals as places of execution, they are murdering our priests and our pilgrims. Is it naught to thee, Father?"

But Seraphim was silent.

And others said, "He is called Napoleon, but he is in reality Antichrist. Lead us, O Seraphim, against him in the name of the Lord."

But Seraphim was silent. His face retained unchanged its look of exaltation; his uplifted eyes still seemed bent on some unearthly vision; his attentive ears seemed to be listening to some other voices. The old monk never spoke a word. Napoleon and the world had no power to shatter his vision. Napoleons might come and go, but the truth to which he was a witness remained unchanging, unchanged. And if Napoleon had come to Sarof and pulled the hermitage down about Seraphim's ears, the old monk would still have prayed on in silence.

Almost every characteristic of the Father and every circumstance of his life had something in it

that is emblematic and suggestive. In his old age, when he became so famous, he received thousands of letters, most of which, however, he answered without opening! It is told how in his old age the light of sainthood shone from his brow, and on one occasion a holy man coming to visit him in his cell found the light too strong for his eyes and shielded them with his hands.

"What is the matter?" said Father Seraphim.

"The light shines from your head, O holy one."

"Do not be afraid," said the Father. "You also are bright as I am or you could not have seen me thus. I see you also a shining one. Thank God that it has been given to miserable Seraphim to see a manifestation of the Holy Spirit."

The Father during his hermitage scooped out of the trunk of a lightning-stricken oak the coffin that should hold his remains when he died, and he pulled it in at the door of his hut, slept in it at night, and prayed beside it by day.

He was an extraordinary ascetic, and yet in the picture that you get of him in his old age, when he relaxed his asceticism, he is distinguished by the warmth of his love and the sweetness of his counsel. The pilgrims who come to him he calls his "joys"; before even the wicked he falls down and he kisses their feet. When he gives his benediction he also gives a handful of that dried black bread, *sukaree*, with which

he fed Mishenka, the bear which he tamed in the woods — Father Seraphim's bread which came down from heaven, the bread of the *podvig*.

My pilgrim acquaintance took me to the various shrines, and we knelt and kissed the thousand-day stone still standing before the great rough-hewn cross that the saint made, kissed the ikons, crossed ourselves before many forest shrines, and eventually came to the far shrine where Seraphim spent so many years in the wilderness. Here an aged monk, taking the place of the *starets*, asked us our Christian names and where we came from. He had a great sack of *sukaree* similar to that which Seraphim had dispensed, and he gave us each a handful with his parting benediction. At the well, now made into an elaborate bath-house, men one side and women the other, my pilgrim had a bath. It struck me as rather interesting that the monks of Sarof had fitted a dozen or so taps to Seraphim's natural spring and conducted it through pipes — that is the true ecclesiastical function, to put taps to living water.

I went into the bath-house and watched some peasants stand under the frigid douche, and when my friend had put his clothes on again — without drying himself — we took each a bottle of the water and put it in our pockets.

Then away again from Sarof and home over the snow. I carried the *sukaree* and the water from the

well that I might give them to the old grandmother at Vladikavkaz when I went south — the actual *sukaree* with which Father Seraphim fed the bear! Some weeks later when I went to the Caucasian city I call my Russian home I took the old lady my gift from the Father. Next day behold her doling out half-thimblefuls of the water to her visitors and giving them each a crumb of the comfort of St. Seraphim to eat.

III

TOLSTOY'S FLIGHT FROM HOME

ASTAPOVO RAILWAY STATION.

FROM a historical figure to a contemporary figure. From the simplicity of a mediæval choice such as Seraphim's to the difficulty of the choice that confronts a modern.

Nothing in Tolstoy's life is so interesting to me as the circumstances of his death, his flight from home to the monastery, his perishing on a wayside station like some aged pilgrim broken down on the way to Jerusalem. The story is such a beautiful, pathetic, touching one that the station of Astapovo may well be an object of pilgrimage for people who can feel in themselves the poignancies of life, and who are interested in the destinies of mankind.

Not a place for sightseers, however! A dreary journey at the rate of eighteen miles an hour and at the end of it all this little station on a by-line. In the waiting-room are peasants in rags, in sheepskins, in old blouses, peasants sleeping on forms; bundles on the floor, heaps of bundles, tied-up sacks, ancient

green trunks. On one side of the room is a grandfather's clock, on the other is a little wooden chapel with ikons and votive candles. From the clock to the chapel runs a long linoleum-covered bar, and on the ikon side of it are scores of fresh loaves, while on the clock side are vodka and wine. On the top of the clock burns a paraffin lamp. There is praying and disputing and tea-drinking, children crying, bundles, boxes, pointsmen with dim lanterns, a mouldy-looking gendarme, and it is five o'clock in the morning.

Out of the lingering train they brought Tolstoy into just such a room and to such a scene. "They brought him through here," says the heavy bearded man behind the bar, "and they put him first in the woman's room and then took him to a room in the stationmaster's house."

The man behind the bar has trained his whiskers to look like those of Tolstoy, and is vain enough to ask me: "Did you not take me for Tolstoy's double? Some are frightened when they see me and think I am Tolstoy's ghost. Am I not like him?"

"Did you look as like him *then?* What did Tolstoy's friends think of your appearance?"

"They laughed."

"Did you have many people here?"

"Not many strangers, fifteen of the family, twenty correspondents, a general from Petersburg, two doctors. . . . I put them all up and fed them."

A gruff, astonishing old fellow, this double of Tolstoy. A strange coincidence that Tolstoy should die at his station. He is heavy, awkward, unpleasant-looking, like a Guy Fawkes effigy of Tolstoy; and as you watch him cross the waiting-room it seems as if his hair might fall off and prove to be a wig, and as if one might pull his beard and whiskers away.

But he is quite obliging to me, and shows me the marble tablet in the stationmaster's wooden wall, and directs me to the room in which everything stands just as it did then, which is being preserved so *for all time* — if Time spares Tolstoy's memory.

The first I ever heard of Tolstoy was the discrediting whisper, "His wife banks his money; everything is in his wife's name." And later on, when I came to Russia, coupled with national pride in Leo Nikolaevitch was always the rumour: "When he wants to go to Moscow he travels first-class; he does not go on foot as he advises others to do. He counsels us to live simply while he himself lives in style at Yasnaya Polyana. He disbelieves in doctors, but when the least thing is the matter with him doctors are in attendance." I suppose no one really put these things in the balance against Tolstoy's sincerity — unless, perhaps, it was Tolstoy himself.

Tolstoy was evidently heavily oppressed by the worldly life in which he seemed to share and which he seemed to countenance. It was mirrored in his soul

as the everyday reflection of life, the luxury, feasting, drinking, trivial conversation, and vulgar pride of his home.

Some time in his life, perhaps several times, Tolstoy must have been on the point of running away. In order to make his personal life correspond to his teaching, it would have been necessary to give up his wife and family and the life they insisted on living. He ought to have gone out into the wilderness and become a hermit or a pilgrim. So he would have made his personality and doctrine into one great snow-crowned mountain and holy landmark in the national life of Russia.

Tolstoy failed to do this, not through weakness, but because he felt he would lift a heavier cross and would be truer to his own ideal if he continued to lead his life in "the world," in the midst of the frivolities and luxuries which did not pertain to him. He would live his personal life against the background of this stupidity, his flesh nailed to that cross.

His life will not stand out in relief till some one writes the evangel of his life. As yet Tolstoy is merely a great man, the author of *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*. Few know the real significance of his life. But certainly it may be said of him, despite calumnies and appearances, "He had no possessions on earth; he always confessed to being a stranger and a pilgrim here. He did not believe that machinery or medicine

or law were of any value to the soul of man. And though he lived in the midst of wealth he lived very simply."

A very brilliant old man at Yasnaya Polyana. You went away impressed with his brilliance, and even if you were inclined to scoff you still acknowledged he was great. But greatness was not much to Tolstoy; it was surely nothing to him that he remained *great* to the end. The chief fact about him was that for many years he was really *old* and confused in spirit, troubled. In his heart of hearts he was not sure that he was living the true life. He felt a doubt that the emptiness and vanity around him were his own emptiness and vanity. The world was too much with him; the vision forsook him.

In the blaze up of the candle before death he saw his way and sought sanctuary from the world, fled. . . .

And he perished on the road, with his back to Yasnaya Polyana and the "world." In the room where he died are the poor two-foot-six by five-foot-six iron bedstead, the table with medicine bottles, a chair, the enamel basin they washed him in. It is all to remain as it was on the day that he died. Pleasant symbolism! The world will also remain the same: it will remove his body to Yasnaya Polyana, and quarrel over the prayer to be said over the grave; it will quarrel over the rights in his autograph manuscripts; it will publish the old man's love-letters; it will rig up in Moscow

a facsimile of Astapovo Station and the room where he died; it will arrange ten-year jubilees, fifty-year jubilees, centenaries; build statues . . .; but those who seek to know the true Tolstoy, the real man who had this strange life-journey, will hear the whisper, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

IV

BACK TO MOSCOW

THE Russians are considerably more interested in religion and religious ideas than other nations. Perhaps that is due to the greater national growth and greater national changes: questions about destiny rise to the surface of each man's mind. The appetite for religious discussion is robust and eager. You go to a debate which begins at eight in the evening. Some one reads a lecture which lasts three hours and then there is a three hours' general discussion. The room is packed, no windows are open, but every one is keen. A roar of general conversation ensues at the ten-minutes interval every hour and a half.

A curious story enacted itself whilst I was in Moscow this spring. A journalist discovered a group of Hindu philosophers doing a turn at a smart cabaret restaurant. In the midst of a vulgar music-hall programme they were performing rather beautifully on their native instruments. They seemed somewhat out of place; and the journalist, knowing English, sought them out and entered into conversation with them — as you can at

the cabaret, where performers mix pretty freely with those who have come to eat and be amused. Two days later the story of the Hindus appeared in one of the Moscow newspapers. Their leader was the chosen missionary of Sufism, and was going through all the world preaching a new gospel. He had had a considerable fashionable success in London and Paris, and at the latter city a Russian hearing his music — which was in itself an illustration of Sufism — had said, "Come to Russia, I'll arrange everything for you."

"I'd like to," said the Hindu, "I have long wished to go there."

The Russian brought a form of contract and engaged the missionary and his fellows to play every night for six months in cabaret restaurants and music-halls in Russia. But the Hindu averred that he thought he was signing an agreement for a lecturing tour.

Readers of this story in the morning newspapers were much touched, and a lady whom I know sought out X—— at his hotel, questioned him, and found that he was indeed a serious religious man, desirous of spreading the gospel of Sufism in Russia. And she promised to rescue his mission.

In a week or so she had arranged a meeting for him, and X—— came with his fellow-Hindus and their instruments and gave a lecture and rendered some music. Several of the most cultured people in Moscow were present. Mme. Ivanova, the wife

of Viacheslaf Ivanof, interpreted for him sentence by sentence, and afterwards question by question, and answer by answer. The lecture amounted briefly to this: "First there was the One and then all was peace, happiness, bliss. Then the One became the many, and there will never be peace, happiness, bliss again until the many becomes the One. Therefore we should strive towards the One and get rid of the sense of the many."

The lecture lasted about an hour, and the Russians were pleased, curious, earnest. They took the Hindu seriously, and questioned and cross-questioned without mercy. The gentle prophet gave the sweetest replies, delicately evading, politely agreeing, playfully turning simplicities into paradoxes and back again, and all his terms of speech were definite and simple. He never took refuge in anything vague or emotional, treated the infinities and the immensities like little toys or bits of toys. Everything was clear to him, everything simple; he was above all things playful. But the Russians sent question after question and would not take evasion or smile at playfulness, till at last at half-past eleven the gentle Eastern begged to be excused if he did not answer any more questions, as he was tired. Indeed he seemed worn out. But the Russians had a feeling of disappointment. For them the evening was only beginning.

The question of the many and the One, the world

or the cell, the many cares of Martha or the one devotion of Mary, would keep any Russian audience speculating for an indefinite length of time.

In Moscow in March I met again Mme. Odintseva. A great change had come over her life. Her husband had been killed, her fortune lost, and she had changed her religion. When I met her first she was a Theosophist, a modern Hypatia whose home was a temple, an elegant woman surrounded by pictures and volumes of poetry, her own especial rooms all scented with rose de Shiraz. Now all was changed in her life; no pictures, no poets, no perfume, no elegance, and she had exchanged Theosophy for evangelical Christianity. The particulars of her husband's death had evidently been a terrible shock to her. He had been in the habit of paying blackmail to a band of revolutionaries or depraved police, and one night he either failed to bring the money demanded of him, or he quarrelled with his persecutors, or he got tired of life and committed suicide. He was found shot dead, in a lonely spot a mile from his home. A note appointing the rendezvous was found, but the writer was never traced. His wife necessarily does not tell what she went through in mind and soul, but the astonishing result was visible in her new life and home in Moscow. All was in disorder, everything had become coarser, harder. She herself was much stouter, had given up vegetarianism, dressed very simply, read only volumes of sermons and

the New Testament, referred all questions to texts in the Gospels, and went to prayer-meetings every other night.

I accompanied her on one occasion. We went to what may be styled the lowest sort of Evangelical meeting in Moscow. There is no Salvation Army there. This was something in the nature of a slum shelter meeting. The preacher was an enthusiastic barber. There were five or six hundred men and women present at the meeting, and a gendarme stood at the back to see that nothing objectionable was said.

"We have converted three gendarmes," said Mme. Odintseva in my ear. We sat on forms at one side of the room, and could survey the whole meeting without turning our heads. The men present were straight from toil, grimy, unkempt, wild-looking. A few years ago the same type of workman grasped a revolver in his pocket and thought of barricades and revolutions. Now he has a New Testament and sings hymns in dark rooms, the tears stealing down his face the while.

As they sat waiting the opening of the service they looked a stolid, heavy, unemotional crowd, the pale broad-browed women with shawls on their heads, the heavy, unshaven, clumsy men in ill-fitting clothes heavy with dirt. But they all changed under the influence of religious feeling. There was a consciousness of unanimity in this low, vast, irregular room. Something not to be put down in words communicated itself from

man to man. No one had come there to sleep through the sermon or, like Yourgis at Chicago, to get out of the cold. There was attention to the reading of the Scriptures, a communion of melancholy love and passion in the singing of the simple hymns, testifying and confessing with sobs and gesticulations in the midst of the prayers, happy cries of pain and anguish from people whose sole confession was, "I am unworthy, Lord, an unworthy one, O Lord, have mercy!"

The barber's sermon was simple and sweet. "Read the Gospel, brothers; the whole sense of your lives is in the Gospel. If you are in doubt which way to act turn to the Gospel; do not ask other people, do not try to remember what other people have done, but be guided directly by the words of God. And if you have sinned, and if your past life has become unbearable to you, do not despair, turn to the Testament; it is just one big forgiveness from beginning to end."

Mme. Odintseva was anxious that I should like the barber, he was a favourite of hers. Frequently during his sermon she whispered in my ear, and called my attention to points she considered good. Yes, the barber was interesting; he was giving a new criterion to the people, a new touchstone for good and evil.

After his sermon we concluded with ten minutes' private prayer and a last hymn. In England the private prayer would have been silent, and there would have been that strange surcharged silence which

suggests to the mind that there might be an explosion if one were to light a match. But in Russia though they had borrowed the idea they had understood its practice differently. The prayer was not silent.

We all stood up to pray, and as we stood there began a murmuring and a mumbling and a calling, a general muttering and a crying, a sonorous clamour, hands waving, faces thrown upward toward heaven, faces drooping and sobbing, every one saying his own prayer, and every one saying different. It was a music, a symphony of pain and anguish from an orchestra of human hearts. I did not pray, but looked about me and saw the people swaying as if a wind were blowing among them. There seemed to be no silent lips, and the barber-pastor prayed with the rest, indistinctly and personally and yet vocally. Far away, beyond the low roof of the meeting-room, a mysterious and understanding God heard each.

V

THE RELIGION OF SUFFERING

NIETZSCHE wrote of religion disparagingly as an intoxicant, and yet by his own religion he was intoxicated. No one ever acted more strangely or became more excited under the influence of personal religion than Nietzsche. It is no reproach to religion that it changes reasonable beings to emotional beings. And yet there is associated with religion a false emotionalism and sentimentalism that we call morbidity, a desire to be miserable and to make other people miserable, a wearing of weeds on festival days, pessimism and "God grant we may all be as well two months hence," a living with death and a loving of the gruesome.

Gloominess is a danger for the Slav soul as with us it is for the Celtic. The bright energy of the Teuton is lacking. It is not worth while *making* things or working for *position*. The mind is free and questioning. There is no sense of —

> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine,

or of

> The trivial round, the common task,
> Will furnish all we ought to ask.

Nature is "vainly sweet," and the eye looks out on the recurring pageant of the seasons with unutterable ennui and sadness. And in life the petty circumstances, if congenial, are but playfully pleasant, but if uncongenial, seem surcharged with malice.

The river that runs through life is easily dammed, floods the whole being of a man, and becomes stagnant, whilst poisonous mists lower over him. The joyful current ceases.

It is a common disaster in Russia, the falling into a morbid state. A Russian poet writes:

All earthly perishes, thy mother and thy boyhood.
Thy wife betrays thee, yea, and friends forsake;
But learn, my friend, to taste a different sweetness
Looking to the cold and Arctic seas.
Get in thy ship, set sail for the far Pole,
And live midst walls of ice. Gently forget
How there you loved and struggled;
Forget the passions of the land behind thee;
And to the shudderings of gradual cold
Accustom thy tired soul,
So that of all she left behind her here
She craveth nought whatever,
When thence to thee floods forth the beams of light celestial,

which is a beautiful poem written for those who have become morbid. It is a beloved poem, and you may come across it written laboriously and exquisitely on tinted paper. But those who read it and love it will will never "step into the ship, set sail for the far Pole";

it is not an invitation to join Shackleton, not even figuratively. It is for those who love and nurse their sorrows. They have not the power nor the wish to move. They are transfixed by mournful ideas, ideas that sing through the air as they come, like arrows, and yet console as with music. As another poet (Brussof) writes:

On a lingering fire you burn and burn away,
O my soul,
On a lingering fire you burn and burn away
With sweet moan.

You stand like Sebastiàn shot through with arrows,
Without strength to breathe,
You stand like Sebastiàn shot through with arrows
In shoulder and breast.

Your enemies around you look on with mirth
Bending the bow,
Your enemies around you look on with mirth
Increasing the woe.

So burns the funeral pyre, the arrows stinging gently
In the eventide,
So burns the funeral pyre, the arrows stinging gently
For the last time,

which indicates a favourite mood in Russian poetry. Students say such poetry over to one another in their rooms of an evening, teachers in provincial towns say such verses to their women friends, local journalists talk of them, gentle souls of either sex take down the book from the shelf and turn to the familiar page and

live with the poet's pain. Such is the melancholy of the cultured, a morbid yet touching melancholy. It is refined. The thoughts are scented, and it is literature and not life which is lending some one expression. But lower down in society, where there is less reading, life itself gives the terms of this outlook. So the coffin-maker in Tchekhof's story — "Rothschild's Fiddle" — has a ledger in which he notes down at the end of each day the *losses* of the day. All life expresses itself to him in losses, terrible, terrible losses. Smerdyakof, Dostoieffsky's most morbid conception, catches cats and hangs them at midnight with a ceremony and ritual of his own invention.

The old beggar pilgrim sings with cracked voice as he trudges through wind and rain:

I will go up on the hi-igh mounta-ain
And look into the mi-ighty de-ep,
A-and see about me a-all the earth
Where I fre-et and ve-ex my soul.
Ah, Eternity, it is but The-e I se-ek,
Little gra-ave, my little gra-a-a-a-ve,
You are my e-everla-asting ho-ome.
Yellow sand my be-ed,
Stones my ne-eigh-bours,
Wo-orms my fri-ends,
The da-amp earth my mo-other,
Mo-other, my mo-other.
Take me to e-e-ternal re-est.
O Lord, have me-e-e-e-ercy![1]

[1] Cited by the priest Florensky, who copied down the song as he heard it (*The Pillar and Foundation of Truth*).

Indeed, many such examples might be adduced to show the pre-occupation of the Russian with the idea of death. The funeral service music is favourite popular music. In the procession of moods in the soul of the young man he comes comparatively rapidly to "worms my neighbours." The excessive number of suicides in Russia may be explained by the extraordinary liability of the Russian soul to fall into a morbid state.

But we are all of us, even the merriest hearts that "go all the way," subject to morbid moods, to fits of depression, black hours when we are ready to deny the world, our ambition in it, our own life, our greatest happiness, and live wilfully in an atmosphere of grief and pessimism, loving sorrow for its own sake, lamenting for the sake of lamentation. We love what Dostoieffsky calls self-laceration. We must every month or so deliver ourselves up to the Giant Despair and be cudgelled.

> The darker the night the clearer the stars,
> The deeper the sorrow the nearer to God,

says a Russian proverb, but these recurrent moods are not really sorrow, they are a being morbid. They have nothing in common with the suffering that comes from destiny itself, nothing of the circumstances of going into the wilderness, or taking the road with the burden on one's back, nothing of the pangs of new birth, of the *podvig*.

Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the midnight hours
Toiling and waiting for the morrow,
He knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers.

— Who never ate his bread in real sorrow. Life is of this sort, that if you will stake all of it for a new life you will get the new life. But when you really do give up all the old and dear, that is a dark and terrible hour, the hour of renunciation, of the *podvig*.

And on the road of life itself there is a great gulf between the vigorous and Teutonic "Welcome each rebuff that turns earth smoothness rough" and the morbid and Oscar Wildean "living with sorrow," a great gulf between Father Seraphim kneeling a thousand days on a rock, and the sad "intelligent" who reads to himself in the evening hour:

To stand like Sebastiàn shot through with arrows,
Without strength to breathe,
To stand like Sebastiàn shot through with arrows
In shoulder and breast.

Tolstoy in his later years was morbid. I suppose if the psychology of Tolstoy's life were to be followed out we should be surprised at the frequent recurrence of morbid and despondent moods. Nothing seems more characteristic of his later years than fruitless quarrelling with the life of Yasnaya Polyana, threatening to run away, lamentations, self-lacerations. But now and again in relief Tolstoy did actually flee. He took

the road to Moscow to live like a simple artisan and earn his living by carpentering, or he set off for a monastery where some famous monk lived in his cell, and sought relief by confession and Christian intercourse.

That going forth on the road, a-seeking new life, is characteristic. At times one would think half Russia is on the road. Utility has been flung aside, the chances of gain have been passed over, the so-called duty to work and fulfil your place in the state has been flung to the winds, and the Russian is out on the dusty road, wearing out his boots, thinking, trudging, praying, recognising — finding what his soul desires. That is not morbidity, but a noble form of life.

And many promise themselves wholly to God and enter monasteries or convents, and there find happiness, the bright ray of destiny they sought with their eyes in a dark world.

> Every morning, noon, and night
> Praise God! says Theocrite

— that is not a morbid life, though a life of denial. It does not mean that every one who would live well should enter a monastery or a convent, it only means that some one whose soul craved such a life has found his way. How we have suffered in England from the difficulty of giving one's soul to God in that way. Those who would have been monks and sisters have had to give themselves in other ways. There are thousands

of other ways. Every one who is living well has found a way. The way meant renunciation, hardship, sorrow — but not morbid sorrow, the sorrow which leaves you as you were, as the cloud of gnats wailing by the tree and the stream leave the tree, leave the stream, just as they were, just what they were.

The differentiation between morbid sorrow and real sorrow, between self-laceration and the tribulation that comes of destiny, is important if we would understand aright what the Russian means by the "Religion of Suffering."

The religion of suffering, of which so much is said, is a term easily misunderstood, meaning differently in the mouths of different people. The political propagandist holds that the Russian people are melancholy because their institutions are so bad, and that the religion of suffering is the religion of revolution, a growing resentment against the government.

The morbid Russian will say that the religion of suffering is the knowledge of the truth that *only* in suffering and near to death can you understand anything about life. He will deny that anything else can teach you.

The peasant pilgrim will interpret it as the religion of taking to the road and bearing the cross; being a beggar for Christ's sake; refusing a lift on the road to the Sepulchre, holding that where Christ walked it is not for them to ride.

Another will say it is the religion that helps you to face suffering, and point to Tolstoy's story of the death of Ivan Ilyitch. Ivan Ilyitch was a man who had no religion, and had never faced suffering in his life, an ordinary bourgeois of the type of lower intelligentsia, jovial, selfish, cynical, fond of cards and of his dinner, and having no other particular interest in life except an ambition to make more money. Suddenly he is stricken with cancer, and lives for years in increasing pain till at last he dies in agony. He has no spiritual comfort; pain quite o'ercrows his spirit. The truth is, no pain really conquers the spirit, the spirit always triumphs at the last, even if the body is rendered useless by the struggle. But this truth is lost in the irreligion of Ivan Ilyitch. It would seem it would have been better if he had lived a more regular and healthy life in his youth, but that is a false moral. The fact is he had never faced the solemn mystery of life, never taken his ordinary human share in suffering, and so was lost in the hour of pain. But perhaps there were more spiritual gleams in the end of Ivan Ilyitch than Tolstoy tells us of. Tolstoy was a moralist. But in any case Ivan Ilyitch presents a contrast to a religious Russian on his death-bed, in his last agony, gripping tight in his hand a little wooden cross, his eyes upon the ikon of his patron saint before which the candle is burning.

Another will say, the religion of suffering is that

which helps you to face life, which is perhaps another way of saying that it is the religion which helps you to face death . . . the religion which prompts you to take risks and will face no dangers. He is losing his soul. In a great war he wakens up and offers himself — and saves his soul. Or in the ordinary course of things, in the "weak piping times of peace," he resolves to make a leap in the dark and get life, he gives up the old for the new — he saves his soul, and out of his sufferings springs a glory.

Still it is not for every one to make this leap in the dark. Villagers, the peasants of a countryside, have obviously no call that way, or seldom a call that way. They have not the need that the townsman has, they have satisfying visions of truth, from nature, in their way of life, in their traditional customs. *Brand* was probably wrong trying to lead his village flock up among the glaciers and avalanches to make a church of ice. He should have preached such sermons and made such appeals in towns. He would have led people from the towns. Nevertheless there has been a cult of *Brand* in Russia, especially since Ibsen's long drama was produced at the Theatre of Art, and many divinity students and young priests have been touched by his vigorous onslaught on the quiet lives of simple folk.

On the other hand, there have not been wanting vigorous opponents to *Brand* and the "God of the Heights," and I have even seen the scientist work-

ing to relieve pain put in opposition to *Brand* working to increase the pain and sorrow in the world. But in that opposition lies a misconception. Crucifixion under chloroform does not conquer death and sin, and there is no sleeping-draught for the young man on the threshold of life who has got to dare and suffer and die many times before he emerges at his noblest and richest.

Dostoieffsky voiced the religion of suffering for Russia, he suffered himself, and in his personal suffering discovered the national passion. He sanctified Siberia, redeeming the notion of it from that of a foul prison and place of punishment to a place of redemption and finding one's own soul. He did not find Siberia an evil place, but on the contrary, found it holy ground. These men came face to face with reality who had lived till then in an atmosphere of unreality. The roads of Siberia were roads of pilgrimage. Dostoieffsky sent successively his two most interesting heroes to tread those roads — Raskolnikof and Dmitri Karamazof. Tolstoy develops and materialises the idea in the story of Katya and Neludof.

Then in his novels Dostoieffsky generally shows the suffering ones, never suggesting the idea that the suffering should be removed. He has no interest in the non-suffering normal person. He prefers a man who is torn, whose soul is disclosed and bare. He feels that such a man knows more, and that his life can show

more of the true pathos of man's destiny. Such people think, dream, pray, hope, they are infinitely lovable, they are clearly mortal. Hence a preoccupation with suffering, a saying *yes* to suffering when the obvious answer seems to be *no*, and *Let this cup pass from me.* It is perhaps because the West has taken it for granted that suffering is an evil thing, and has set itself consciously the task of eliminating suffering from the world that the East has emphasised its acceptance of suffering. Nietzsche noted what he called the watchword of Western Europe — "We wish that there may be nothing more to fear." He despised that wish. The East does not despise the wish, but finds it necessary to affirm its own belief more vigorously. It accepts many things which the West considers wrong in themselves — War, Disease, Pain, Death.

VI

THE TWO HERMITS

ALTHOUGH self-laceration and being wilfully gloomy are frequent in Russian life the idea of repentance is not popular, there being no particular passion for righteousness and consequently no insistence on sin as something deadly in itself. In Russia you never hear that the wages of sin is death. The man who sins is even thought to be nearer to grace than he who never sins, the prodigal nearer than his elder brother. "Sin committed is nothing to grieve over. What is done can't be helped. Hurry on and do something else, don't waste time in penance or repentance." There is no idea of penance in connection with the Russian Church, and consequently no "indulgences." Russia has escaped the evil of thinking that it is possible to pay for past actions and neutralise their effect. Even in asceticism the Russian has no idea of paying for sins by fasting and praying and mortifying the flesh. And he who sets out on pilgrimage does not do so as a penance for sin, he is not trying in any way to make up to God for sin. His act is an act of praise, a promise, his asceticism is a denial of this world in honour of the world to come, a denial of the world's peace

in praise of the peace which passeth understanding, a denial of the world's truth in allegiance to the Holy Ghost, a showing forth in symbolic act of the glory of man's heavenly destiny.

The story of two hermits given by the Russian philosopher Solovyof gives a Russian point of view.

In the desert in Egypt two hermits were saving their souls. Their caves were quite near one another but they never entered into conversation unless it were to sing psalms at one another or call one another by name now and then. In this way of life they passed many years, and the fame of their sanctity spread beyond Egypt and into many lands. But in course of time the devil, mortified by their holiness, succeeded in tempting them. He snared them both at the same time, and not saying a word to one another they gathered the baskets and pallets which in their long spare time they had plaited from grasses and palm leaves, and they set off together for Alexandria. There they sold their work, and on the money they got for it they spent three gay days and nights with drunkards and sinners, and on the fourth morning, having spent everything, they returned to their cells in the desert.

One of them wept bitterly and howled aloud. The other walked at his side with bright morning face and sang psalms joyfully to himself. The first cried:

"Accursed that I am, now am I lost for ever. I shall never out-pray my hideous sin, never, never.

All my fasts and hymns and prayers have been in vain. I might as well have sinned all the time; all lost in one foul moment! Alas! alas!"

But the other hermit went on singing, quietly, joyfully.

"What!" cried the first hermit. "Have you gone out of your mind?"

"Why?" asked the joyful one.

"Why don't you repent?"

"What is there for me to repent of?" asked the joyful one.

"And Alexandria, have you forgotten it?" asked his companion.

"What of Alexandria? Glory be to the Almighty who preserves that famous and honourable town!"

"But what did we do in Alexandria?"

"What did we do? Why, we sold our baskets of course, prayed upon the ikon of holy St. Mark, visited several churches, walked a little in the town hall, conversed with the virtuous and Christly Leonila. . . ."

The repentant hermit stared at the other in pale stupefaction.

"And the house of ill-fame in which we spent the night . . ." said he.

"God preserve us!" said the other. "The evening and night we spent in the guest-house of the patriarch."

"Holy martyrs! God has already blasted his reason," cried the repentant hermit. "And with whom did we get drunk on Tuesday night? Tell me that."

"We partook of wine and viands in the refectory of the patriarchate, Tuesday being the festival of the Presentation of the most Blessed Mother of God."

"Poor fellow! And whom did we kiss, eh?"

"We were honoured at parting with a holy kiss from that father of fathers, the most blessed Archbishop of the great city of Alexandria and of all Egypt, yes and of Libya, and of Pentapolis, and of Kur-Timothee with its spiritual court, and with all the fathers and brothers of his divinely appointed clergy."

"Ah, why do you make a mock of me? Does it mean that after yesterday's abominations the devil has entered into possession of you. You embraced sinners, you accursed one."

"I can't say in whom the devil has found a home, in me or in you," said the other, "in me when I rejoice in the God's gifts and His holy will, when I praise the Creator and all His works, or in you who rave and call the house of our most blessed father and pastor a house of ill-fame, and defame the God-loving clergy, calling them sinners as it were."

"Ah, you heretic!" screamed the repentant hermit. "Arian monster! Thrice accursed lips of the abominable Appollonion!"

And the repentant hermit threw himself upon his companion and tried to kill him. But failing to do that he grew tired of his efforts, and the two resumed their journey to their caves. The repentant one

beat his head on the rock all night and tore his hair and made the desert echo with his howls and shrieks. The other calmly and joyfully went on singing psalms.

In the morning the repentant hermit made the following reflections:

"Just think of it. I had earned from Heaven especial blessings and holy power by my fasts and my *podvigs*.[1] This has already become evident by the miracles and wonders I have lately been enabled to perform, but after this that has happened, all is lost. By giving myself up to fleshly abomination I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and that sin, according to the word of God, will be forgiven me neither in this life nor in the life to come. I have thrown the pearl of heavenly purity to be trampled under feet by swine, by devils. The devils have taken my pearl, and, no doubt, having stamped it into the mire they will come after me and tear me. Well, well, if I am irrecoverably lost whatever is there for me to do out here in the desert?" And he returned to Alexandria and gave himself up to a life of debauch. Eventually, on one occasion when he was hard up he conspired with other vagabonds, fell upon a rich merchant, killed him, and robbed him. He was tracked down, caught and tried in the courts. The judge condemned him to death and he died without repentance.

[1] *Podvig* is a Russian word for holy exploits and victories, especially for those consisting in a denial of the world. See Chapter on *podvigs*, page 111.

But his old companion continued his holy life, his *podvizhnitchestvo*,[1] attained a high degree of sanctity and became famous through the many miracles wrought at his cave-mouth. At a word from his holy lips a woman past the age of child-bearing yet conceived and brought forth a male child. When at last the good man died, his shrivelled and worn-out body, suddenly, as it were, blossomed in beauty and youth, becoming translucent and filling the air with a heavenly perfume. Over his holy relics a monastery was built, and his name went forth from the church of Alexandria to Byzantium and thence to the shrines of Kief and Moscow.

The lesson of this story is, according to Varsonophy, who told it, that there are no sins of any importance except despondency. Did not both these hermits sin alike and yet but one of them was lost, namely, he who desponded?

Varsonophy was a pilgrim from Mount Athos, who used to say, "Eh, eh, don't grieve about your sins, be done with them, they don't count. Sin 539 times in a day but don't grieve about it, that's the chief thing. If to sin is evil, then to remember sin is evil. There is nothing worse than to call to mind one's own sins. . . . There is only one deadly sin and that is despondency, from despondency comes despair, that is more than sin, it is spiritual death."

[1] *Podvizhnitchestvo* = the life of going on doing *podvigs*, the continuance of denial of the world.

VII

AT THE CONVENT OF MARTHA AND MARY

ONE Sunday I went to the convent of St. Martha and St. Mary in the Bolshaya Ordinka on the other side of the Moscow river. It is a wonderful institution, belonging to the new Russia and yet being part of the old, a young dainty stem with leaves sprung from the rugged many-wintered tree of the Russian Church. Like St. Vladimir's Cathedral at Kief, its beauty lies not in any antiquity or ruin. It is a new institution; it is served by young people; and has new life, new interest, and ideals. It is the convent of which the Grand Duchess Elizaveta Federovna, the widow of the Grand Duke Sergius, whose murder was contrived by Azef the Jewish agent-provocateur during the revolutionary period, is the abbess.

The remains of the Grand Duke were deposited at the shrine of St. Alexey, and praying there, the grief-stricken widow promised herself, her life, and her estate to God. The beautiful sister of the Empress found her way from desolation and the tomb to a bright and spacious and yet devoted life, and she was consecrated and took the veil.

One of the first deeds of her new life was to purchase a building site in one of the poorer parts of the city, and to have it consecrated for the building of a convent and churches. A temporary church was put up and services took place from the first. The first plans were realised in 1907; the sisterhood was already formed and had begun work by February 1909. The Grand Duchess is the abbess and there are about a hundred sisters. Every one is young, every one is active. No woman over forty can enter the sisterhood, no one also who is weak physically or likely to be unable to perform the arduous labours for and among the poor which the sisters impose upon themselves.

The convent combines in its ideal the imitation of both Martha and Mary. Each sister dedicates herself to "God and her neighbour." She would sit at Jesus' feet like Mary, and be occupied with many things like Martha. But certainly the idea of Martha and service stands first in their minds. Their religion is the religion of good deeds. They visit, clothe, comfort, heal the poor, and all but work miracles, flowers springing in their footsteps where they go. They receive and consider thousands of letters and beggars. They perform work which is often left to the municipalities and Care committees in the West, but the work is much more fruitful since it is done in the Name of Christ rather than in the name of reason. In some

convents the sisters are divided into Marthas and Marys, and there is a question when a new one takes her place — a Martha or a Mary? But in the Martha Marinskaya all have to be Marthas. Each sister has a specific calling and name, *e.g.* the letter-writer, the purchaser, the guest-receiver: there are medical sisters, church sisters, kitchen sisters, and so on.

The service in the convent church is open and free. All and sundry may go in. And yet necessarily one is in a way a guest, a visitor. It is a very gentle and delicate experience to stand on the stone flags of the wide church beside fifty or sixty maidens in white and avow allegiance to the same emblems, praise the same splendid Creator and God.

I came to the service, but I also wished to satisfy a desire to see the frescoes and wall-paintings by Nesterof. The rood-screen, the apse, and the sides have been painted by that great artist, and two or three of his most beautiful pictures are the surface of the walls.

There is a large picture, the whole width of the church, a presentment of Holy Russia at the margin of a birch forest; plains and folding valleys and uplands and broad acres in the distance. In the foreground bright green grass thick with purple labiate and yellow rattray, an opening in the forest, delicate silver birches on each side and tiny pine trees, seedlings of pine trees. In the opening all manner of

characteristic Russian "poor folk" gazing, praying, kneeling, crying. For a haloed Christ stands among the birch trees and receives all who will come to Him.

The Russian peasant believes that Christ wanders on his roads —

> the heavenly King
> Our mother Russia came to bless
> And through our land went wandering;

and he is quite right, believing that. The thought, almost by itself, constitutes the idea of "Holy Russia."

The most beautiful picture in the church is the dedicatory Martha and Mary — "The Master is here and calleth thee" [1] — a panel in front of which stood a sister all in white like a statue, little candles in front of her, a stout six-feet wax candle beside her.

A tall and portly priest with long hair, whimsical and gentle, took the service — Father Mitrophan; and he walked to and fro, now with the people, now behind the sacred gates. A score of sisters in black veils and with black crowns on their heads sang in the choir. A sister stood at a counter by the door and sold candles. A congregation of sisters, fashionable visitors, peasants, working-people, and beggars, grouped themselves miscellaneously in the wide, open, light-filled body of the church. Of course there were no seats. It was pleasant to be there; there was good air, a fragrance occasionally of flowers, and a

[1] The frontispiece of this book.

sense of young women in a certain mood towards God. We sang, assented, crossed ourselves, bowed. The sixty sisters all in white prostrated themselves, and there was a billowy flood of white linen on the floor. And the black choir sang, gently, pitifully, sweetly, exaltedly, with *pale* voices. It was their church, their temple. They expressed themselves there as a maid expresses herself in her private room at home. The gentle Nesterof paintings pertained to them specially. They were chosen by them.

In the midst of the service in come the convent waifs, children of the childless, two dozen little boys in green blouses, two dozen little girls in blue frocks and drab pinafores. And they stand in the midst of the church. They are so small, they might be the children of dwarfs.

Father Mitrophan comes out to deliver his sermon, and we all move up closer towards the altar rails so as to hear him. He is higher than we, and looks a shepherd with a flock about him. A gentle sermon: "You have parents in the flesh, you have also parents in the Spirit. There are earthly families, there are also spiritual families; worldly intercourse and heavenly intercourse. Our parents bore us and then as soon as convenient brought us to the font to give us back to God. The parents were not present at the baptism because they were only parents of the flesh, but the guardian angels were present because they

were parents of the Spirit. To-day is the day of St. Afanasief and of St. Sergey, spiritual fathers, to whom we must look for guidance and love. What do they teach us? Why, first of all, to do things, to work. What a worker was St. Paul, for instance, writing fourteen epistles. We mustn't be lazy! We shan't get anything without making effort. Fast day comes; we say it doesn't matter much, we'll eat ordinary fare. It's time to go to church; you say to yourself, 'No, no, don't need to, and you take a stool and a book of church verses and sing to yourself pleasantly and comfortably. No, no, it won't do. The Fathers of the Church didn't go lazy like that, or where should we be. . . ." and so on, in a sententious manner and sing-song tone, nodding his head and pronouncing many of his dicta in a colloquial tone of voice like an old woman saying proverbs. He had an Orthodox voice. There is such a thing in Russia, a voice and manner in which the Church and the Church service are reflected. It communicates itself to the worshipper and is often a super-added grace of personality in a man or woman, a certain Byzantinism in expression, a holding oneself like a figure in a fresco.

Amen! A crossing of ourselves; the sermon is ended. The crowd about the altar breaks up, and we spread ourselves out in the fresher spaces of the church once more, and the *pale* singing of the black-robed choir recommences as the conclusion of the

liturgy is sung. The sixty sisters prostrate themselves together in a billowy mass once more. Worshippers cross themselves before the altar and go out. The Communion bread is taken and the service is over. The waifs march out; we all come out.

It is good to have been at prayers with the sisters, just as if one had spent a few hours in perfect mood in a garden. It took my mind back to a morning in an immense London church when I came in late and was taken up and put in a seat just underneath a picture of the Virgin. At the Virgin's feet were armfuls of lilies. I had a sense, I have it now — all flowers are flowers at the feet of the Virgin.

VIII

THE WAY OF MARTHA

THE way of Russia is more the way of Mary, and yet no people are more given to working for their neighbours and being actively kind than the Russians. There are many Marthas among them. They visit the poor, bring food to the hungry, clothe the wretched. They work for the suffering people around them. Almost every cultured Russian of grace or character has some social or personal responsibility or care, the passion to put right the affairs of some unhappy family, the will to raise drunkards and law-breakers from spiritual death. It is national and natural, and it is strange that this should be the characteristic of a people who also have a passion for going into the desert and saving their souls.

But it is impossible for every one to go into the desert or take to a cell, and indeed the impulse to go away does not come to every one, and when it does come it is seldom sufficiently strong to break down the ties of everyday life and make a road of the affections — the narrow road that leads away from the world. Even among a mystical people the great

majority remain behind in "the world" and have the normal life, serve man as well as God, marry, have children, work as well as pray, and live through six everydays to one of incense and song. The Church has its two aspects, that of Martha and of Mary, and it is with the way of Martha that we are generally more familiar, though many may look lingeringly towards the wilderness, feeling that perhaps after all the better part is to be found out there.

The way of Martha has come into some discredit in the West owing to the organisation of charity, the reliance on parliaments and philanthropical societies and committees rather than on individual volition. As a substitute for love towards one's fellow-man have appeared many things — voting for a candidate, appeals to policemen and to magistrates, prison, sending a young man to the Colonies, trusting to the court-missionary . . . that is the way of "the world" and not the way of the individual. However much "organisation" there may be there will always remain as a fundamental idea of the Church personal love towards one's neighbour and care for him. Such love when seen is something that convinces in itself, like the action of the good Samaritan.

There is a family I know in Russia, the V's. To come into touch with them is to touch something that works miracles like the hem of the sacred garment. Yet all in the family are Marthas, they are

all of the spirit of good deeds: there is nothing particularly contemplative about any of them. Most interesting of all is the youngest of the children, Lena. She is being brought up in an atmosphere of altruism. She is only twelve years old, and is like a plant springing up in a flower-garden; one can watch her growing more beautiful from day to day. She is gentle, quick, and tender. She has many desires and is eager, but when Julia her eldest sister tells her to do one thing or another, perfectly obedient and submissive. She is slender and wistful like a girl in one of Nesterof's pictures. She has the intense pleasure of a child, and when we read *Alice in Wonderland* together I wondered at the gladness of the little girl. Grown-up humans are often so constrained and polite when you read a paragraph to them. You can never be quite sure that they are not secretly bored. On her birthday Lena *gives* presents to her sisters instead of receiving them, and has been brought up to feel that it is a joy and privilege to give. When distant relatives or friends from far away come to visit the family, Lena gives them presents. One day she was debating what was the very biggest present she could make to a lady who was staying at the house, and she decided to give away one of her little pet tortoises. Once Vassily Vassilitch brought her a present, a big book with pictures. How vexed Julia seemed! "You spoil the child bringing her presents without any special

reason!" said she. She was sorry that he should be giving, and not Lena or she herself.

Julia is so self-denying that some years she goes without a greatcoat even for the coldest winter weather. All her money goes to other people. But she is not at all proud of her good works. She is just simple and cheerful, a quiet though impulsive woman. You never hear her laugh loudly, but there is always a sort of kind warmth and cheerfulness in her face. She will give up a book, her time, her means of making a living, her pleasure, to whatever appeals to her; and the whole house in which she lives is founded on altruism. Occasionally there comes to visit them a friend who is also extremely unselfish and altruistic. Then sometimes there are some amusing, even absurd scenes — contests in altruism.

The family is vegetarian, for no one in it would cause any animal pain. They have even scruples about killing flies and troublesome insects, and rather catch them and put them out of the window than destroy them. One day Julia showed me with horror an article from the *Russian Word* on the fate of lost dogs. The State voted a certain amount of money for poison to destroy ownerless dogs, but the police, instead of killing them with poison in a humane way as intended, hired the worst type of criminals in the town gaols to beat them to death for a few copecks in order that they might peculate the greater part of the money

voted. "Such ugly things are part of the background of our everyday life," said I. "They are hidden from us, but they are always there, none the less." Julia could not believe it.

One summer I spent some days with the family in a big country house in the province of Kaluga. The estate was an island in a loop of a little river. I spent one morning watching the fish which swarmed in the water of the river, and I longed for a rod and a line. Not that I ever caught many fish in that way. But when I was seven years old some one gave me Isaak Walton and a fishing rod, and I slept with *The Compleat Angler* under my pillow. I had visions of great captures of fish. The one thing wanting was a grasshopper. Isaak was always talking of grasshoppers, and I had lost faith in worms and paste. But though I heard grasshoppers in many country banks I could never find one. Here at Dietchino were both grasshoppers and fish in manifest abundance.

In the little river were perch and gudgeon and chub, minnows, pike. I watched the sinister shadows of the pike. They moved about like sharks, and every now and then there would be a splash as if a branch had dropped into the water, and I would see six or seven little fish jumping bodily out of the water as a murderous pike rushed at them, and they fled in terror. The fish seemed pretty hungry. I caught several grasshoppers and rather cruelly threw them

on to the surface of the lake and watched the perch snatch them away. A sad end for the grasshoppers, but a better luncheon for the fish. Lena and her next sister, Olya, were much horrified at my action, though they were too kind and well-trained to say more than "Oh!" when I mentioned it. Later Olya told me how one evening she had seen that on one of the lines left by the village boys a fish was caught and struggling, and how she came next morning and the fish was still on the hook and not taken in, and she thought it so cruel, and wrote a letter to the boy and pinned it on a tree near by.

Some time after that we went out one day and watched the fish. Little Lena had three biscuits in her coat pocket in case she should be hungry. But she broke up two of them and threw the bits to the fish, and we saw them come and eat the fragments with as much avidity as they had taken the grasshoppers I provided. We were out for a walk, Lena and I went on, and she kept one remaining biscuit in case she should be hungry. Presently along the road came a familiar dog and fawned around us ingratiatingly. "Poor dog!" said Lena, "it's just had puppies, it is very hungry," and she took out her last biscuit and gave it to the dog.

The little girl has an almost perfect character, and the fact that she will never do or think anything unkind has a constraining effect on elders in her presence,

and yet she is an open-air little girl, and rows and bathes and plays games and goes long walks, as any boy might wish his sister to do.

Each of the four sisters has inherited consumption, and though not actually in consumption they have all a certain fragility and slenderness. Their only brother died of consumption, a clever boy, who never for a moment permitted grief to enter the hearts of those who were tending him. All was mirth and laughter at his death-bed. Joke after joke, idea after idea put forward. All agreed that it would be absurd to wear black for such a one. And the sisters and near friends went to the funeral in bright summer dresses. They were of those who hope all things, believe all things.

This winter Julia was chiefly engaged arranging popular lectures on the Oriental religions — "in order to give an interest in religion to those who had fallen away from Orthodoxy and had now no religion at all." She had set a room apart for meetings and given it the atmosphere of a church, and there was a library of several hundred volumes, to which visitors referred frequently. She kept open house, and I have often been there in the evening when there were more than a dozen visitors sitting at the long table of the dining-room having tea. There would be all sorts of people, some real seekers, others of a friendly gossipy type. Many of them were really foreign to Julia's nature and temperament, wrapped up in themselves and conse-

quently not able to realise what a sweet and wise and wonderful woman their hostess was. But all were welcome.

Julia's grandmother, a very gentle and simple old lady of eighty, always presided on these occasions, and if she were not drinking tea, a space would be cleared on the tablecloth and *patience* would be laid out. She is always in black, has large eyes and fine brow and a magnificent Roman nose, regards the cards intently, and puts them one upon another deliberately and solemnly as if she knew all their secrets and were the Queen of Spades herself. But she listens to all that is said, and can repeat almost the whole of the conversation after the people are gone. She is of the old Orthodox Russian type and dwells under the ikons. No meal is ever begun without her grace being said. And she also has the gentle spirit of altruism. Every other Sunday night a rather obstinate old lady who belongs to the Evangelical Christians comes and sits beside her and reads in a loud distinct voice a volume of Spurgeon's sermons in translation. And the old lady asks no questions, always seems to be pleased, and goes on putting out her cards and making up her patience pack in sympathetic silence.

Julia has lived in France and England, and she especially likes the English. "They have learned to be so kind," she would say. "They take care not to

injure people's feelings when they talk. They are gentle, and they are not unjust, they are fair. They are centuries in front of us Russians in that way."

That observation struck me very forcibly when I heard it; for Julia has herself an English manner. She is like an English lady of quality of the best type. She has that something which she admires in us expressed in herself.

It is good that the standard notion of an Englishman which one finds in Russia is something which corresponds to this praise which Julia gave us. The Russians see us at our best, that is, as we really are, and they admire us. They like our quiet kindness and fairness. They admire our passion for social reform and "putting the world right."

Julia also is "helping to build the kingdom of heaven upon earth," helping to make the world really ready for the Master when He comes again. She is an *Eager-Heart*, who would even give up her chance of sheltering the heavenly Babe and wondrous Mother in order to take in a human babe and earthly mother homeless in the snow.

That is the way of Martha, the finding of Christ in the suffering human being in the world, the realisation of — "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these ye did it unto Me" as contrasted with the way of Mary — the denial of the world and of the reality of the suffering in it, the pouring of the ointment on the

feet of Christ instead of selling it and giving the proceeds to the poor.

The way of Martha implies a great number of workers and the consequent necessary organisation — a church. It has its priests, its temples and buildings, its ceremonies and sermons. The hermit needs no church, no temple or priest, but the worker in the world needs everything.

Hence the pomp and splendour of the Church is associated with the way of Martha. Its faith is carried like a great banner wherein is depicted a world set free, a kingdom of heaven upon earth. The ranks of the world are understood as grades of authority in the great business of well-doing, and kings and men are consecrated with solemn rites to the service of God. We are enrolled as soldiers of the heavenly King and need a religious music which is military, and appeals of sound and colour which stir the heart.

So in Nesterof's picture of Martha and Mary,[1] Martha is painted in resplendent rose and is in the forefront, whilst the mystical-faced Mary is darkly robed and stands behind her sister. So in Christianity all that is visibly and obviously splendid is associated with the way of Martha — the wonderful cathedrals, the soul-stirring processions, holy wars, solemn rites and pageants. Martha is always to the fore and splendid, and goes to meet Christ, whilst her sister Mary remains in the background at home in faith.

[1] The frontispiece of this book.

IX

MARTHA'S TRUE WAY

THE view I take of the miracles is this, that no one *met* Jesus or *saw* Him who was not miraculously affected in some way or other. The deaf began to hear, those who had never spoken in their lives had their lips unsealed, the cripples found out that they had the souls of men, the sick were as if they were well, scales fell from the eyes of the blind, and he who never saw anything in his life was suddenly awake to beauty. The outcast and the vile learned to believe in themselves; even the dead became alive. When John asked, "Art thou He who should come, or do we look for another?" it was sufficient to answer, "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

And the miracles never cease. As they happened two thousand years ago, so they happen to-day. We have the vision, and our infirmities fall away: we see, we hear, we praise. Christ is . . .

> The subtle alchemist who in a trice
> Life's barren metal into gold transmutes.

There is much of the Gospel written by men who had not the vision, or by politic priests. Many ecclesiastics of the early Church could not understand the mystic story, and misunderstanding it they yet strove to defend by every means in their power the authenticity of their misreadings. Explanations, local colour, even absolute inventions were interpolated in the sacred writings in order to prove that certain dogmas were right, in order to prove that other dogmas were wrong. They actually raised Lazarus materially from death, instead of leaving what was probably the original story, the fact that Jesus convinced Martha and Mary that Lazarus was still alive in the presence of God. Not that the Gospels are the worse, or that we would have them otherwise. There is an added poetry in the marks which time and life make on any living thing. And the Gospels have been crucified as He of whom the Gospels were written was crucified before them.

Most explanations of the miracles are true, but inadequate. They often lead to confusion of thought and the emphasis on the material facts and outward manifestation rather than on the spiritual facts and inner reality. It is true that Christ "went about the world doing good," and that He is to us "an ensample of godly life," but the good that He did was spiritual good.

The works of our Marthas get a great deal of their inspiration from the healing of the sick and the ministry

to the suffering. Progress itself, the whole modern reform movement as far as it associates itself consciously and verbally with Christianity, identifies its inspiration with that touching of Christ's soul which did not permit Him to pass one suffering man without healing him.

But it is often forgotten that the good which He did was spiritual good. The true way of Martha is not so much giving money to the penniless, clothes to the ragged, medicine to the sick, homes to the houseless, decent dwellings to those who live in slums, as it is to make the poor know that all these things are nothing and of no account; as it is to touch their hearts and give them a new outlook upon life. Martha has also to make the blind see, make the deaf hear, the mute speak, and to raise the dead. As it is, it frequently happens that the poor, receiving "charity," are left angry, and so become poorer thereby, and the blind find themselves in a greater darkness, and the deaf in a more deathly silence.

We look on our fellow-creatures with dull eyes, and our personal character and spiritual beauty is not sufficient to lighten up the landscape and the faces of the people around us. There is no light about our heads, and people touching the hem of our garments feel no contact with mystery. So we do not reveal Christ to men. Though all is within our power. Martha's ordeal is as great a one as Mary's, her con-

secration as vital. We cannot go out carelessly and minister to the poor, for if we do, we perform no miracles. And without miracles the poor are not satisfied.

The true Martha has the wishing heart, and her fingers are full of virtue. She is an argument in herself, and her presence without words works true miracles, revealing the mystic meaning of Christ in herself, and causing every one who *meets* or *sees* her to be miraculously affected in some way or other.

. . . . . .

Obviously the service of Martha is always personal. Therefore nothing anonymous is Christian, and philanthropical societies, parliaments, reform movements, and the like are doomed to failure unless they are served by men and women with Christ-faces.

X

MAKING WEST EAST

. . . who made West East
And gave to Man
A new heaven and a new earth,
As Holy John hath prophesied of Me.

THE West seems to have the tradition of the way of Martha, England especially. Our Victorian era, of which the popular teachers were Kingsley, Carlyle, Ruskin, was essentially an era of work and deeds rather than of faith. As children, we in our prime to-day were brought up on the gospel of work. Thoughts about one's soul were considered rather ignoble: they were smoke that we had to consume ourselves. We were urged to forget the question of our souls and *work*. The whole world was working, all the factories of England sang together. Every man in England, from the highest to the lowest, knew when he wakened each morning that he had that day some real and indispensable work to do. The child must learn his lesson in that light. "If I hear of an artist of promise," says Ruskin, "the first question I ask is, 'Does he

work?'" Ruskin dismissed Whistler, who painted rather in the way of Mary, because he obviously did not work. All great men whatsoever worked.

> The heights by great men reached and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight,
> But they, whilst their companions slept,
> Were toiling upwards in the night.

If you want to be a Knox or a Luther or a Cromwell or a Frederick or a Bismarck you must work.

The spirit of industry seemed to be Christianity itself. In reading Froude's history one seemed to gain the idea that the Reformation meant getting rid of idleness and monks and abbeys, and substituting noble labour, honest craftsmen, and factories. It is a modern misapprehension. There was a time when we used to sing a hymn extravagantly opposed to the gospel of work —

> Doing is a deadly thing,
> Doing ends in death.

We have a reputation for work. Most Russians would be incredulous if told that Englishmen had ever sung such words. Yet they have, and we know that we are not like the ants who have always been working and always will work. We have been out of love with work before and will be again.

During the Victorian era every Englishman had his coat off and was working for all he was worth, perspiration of his brow, grime on his body, the clangour

of machinery in his ear. Carlyle found his generation working, and gave it his blessing in effective phrase, and was so obsessed by his own message that he gave up his own quest, his own seeking, and lived in the British Museum, pondering, grubbing, scratching, and turning forth volume after volume of dull Frederick, and he forgot his own soul and the man who wrote *Sartor Resartus* and *The Heroes*.

And although this work, work for work's sake, is not a Christian thing, it is associated in the mind with what I call the "way of Martha." It is an exaggeration of her sweet serviceableness, a supposition that she had gone crazy and had not only become cumbered about with many things, but was so cumbered that she could never in all her life spare a moment to come to the Master. Be that as it may, England had a fairly clear and simple notion of her creed. Work pleased her. Popular opinion was on the side, not of the parson who did nought, but of the old farmer "who stubbed Thornaby Waaste." Tennyson sang work and the goal of work — "All diseases cured by science," "the Parliament of the World," "the rule of the meek upon earth." We gave our shoulders and our hearts and our lips to the work, though indeed not much of the last, for in those days silence was golden.

Now silence is golden only for those who do not know what to say. A change has come about, is coming about. Work has ceased to be holy.

"To labour is to pray." "Do the duty which lies nearest to you, that which is doablest." "Do noble things, not dream them, all day long . . ." such was the message of Victorian literature. And yet in that literature there was a note of discord, and that was the voice of Browning, the first of the moderns, and he wrote:

> Not on the vulgar mass
> Called "work," must sentence pass.

And again:

> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be,
> All, men ignored in me,
> This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

And again:

> He fixed thee midst this dance
> Of plastic circumstance,
> This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

The way of Martha had given place to the way of Mary. My elders read *Rabbi Ben Ezra* to comfort one another:

> Grow old along with me!
> The best is yet to be,
> The last of life, for which the first was made;

and they read it because of a secret sense of failure. But the poem, and the message of Browning in general, came to those of my generation with a different force. When I was twenty I lived with the poem, as did those I loved; I carried it with me wherever I went; it burned, it blazed in my mind. It was a triumphant song. All the beauty of the time seemed to radiate from it, and as I recall it to-day and write the old words down, it brings back to me the fields, the hills, the roads, lime blossoms, roses, faces of the summer when its meaning was first absolutely and clearly mine. What was it in the poem? It was the modern movement. It was good b'ye to the old. It was a sight of one's own immortality and Psyche herself, the ever-lovely one.

But necessarily I cannot write down what it meant. Suffice it that I can remember how a boy of this time reacted to the touch of Browning. Browning was a wonderful turn in English thought.

It was not simply one poem of Browning that broke away from Victorianism. We had held that there was no greater satisfaction than that of the craftsman in the work of his own hands. His was the real *Imitatio Christi* when he made something with his hands and saw that it was good. Then we read *Andrea del Sarto*, despising

> This low-pulsed craftsman's hand of mine,

knowing that the artists who failed, reached a heaven denied to him.

From Browning's day on we have been moving away from Martha and coming to Mary. The note-books of those young ones who loved thoughts began to be filled with verses, sayings, apothegms of a new character, and many of the elder ones to whom we read what we had found were blind and deaf to the new ideas. I remember one old literary man and artist who used always to say, "I take my stand with Jim" — meaning that he held with St. James that faith without works is barren. He belonged to the old.

I admit we were not sober in our judgments. We went to see Ibsen and Bernard Shaw, and it was easy to agree that Nora was right when she fled from her home and her husband to save her soul, and we thought that the immoral and unprincipled Dubedat was sooner to be saved than the hard-working slum doctor. We saw in Solveig, who stayed in the background and prayed, the true type of womanhood, and understood how Peer Gynt through her could be saved. We read Nietzsche, that mad Christian, a sort of Mary who hated her sister Martha, calling out in anger that man had ceased to be man and had become merely *neighbour*. We entered the domain of Russian literature, and read Dostoieffsky and Chekhof and Gorky, and so fell under the spell of Eastern Christianity, where we remain to-day.

The taste of England has been steadily changing this last ten years, and the current becoming deeper

and broader. Russia and the East have been coming steadily nearer, and more and more of us have turned our backs on work and service and that Divine materialism — the raising of the poor. Not that we are on the way to becoming a philosophic and reflective or ascetic nation, or even in the way of singing again "Doing is a deadly thing"; but more and more of our nation is attempting to take to itself and re-express the other aspect of Christianity — the way of Mary.

Even in the North of England, where the land is devoted to work and the towns are little more than barracks of workmen, there is a noticeable and, even from a capitalist's point of view, an alarming change of spirit. The "workers" are rebellious. It is not that they want more money or lighter hours or better conditions. They simply don't want to work. The rising generation is disinclined to settle down, and the time is coming when there will be difficulty in getting labouring hands, when it will be difficult to buy them. The gloom of our industrialism is destined to be broken.

As yet, however, those who represent us in politics, literature, and art belong to the old. Mr. Lloyd George with his care for the poor is a Martha. Mr. Bonar Law is a Martha also. H. G. Wells, with his World set Free, and his rooms with rounded instead of squared corners to help the women to sweep, is a Martha. Our poets are not Marys, and it is necessary to go to Francis Thompson or Rossetti to find a mystic

poet. Our painters, Peter Graham, Farquharson, Leader, and others whose works deck Academy walls, are occupied with the outward appearances of things rather than the transcendental. And since Watts is dead we have not even a mystical portrait painter, but all admire the gift to show in the face money, importance, style, meat. Our people are worth painting, but there is no one to paint them. We need an English Serof to show the true kindred and spiritual relationship of faces.

On the stage we admire Russian opera and Russian ways. We show *The Dynasts* in the same way as it would have been shown in Moscow, or nearly so. There first of all the new tendency is showing. Unfortunately we have a long battle against American humour and vulgarity, the nigger influence and business influence, materialism, the exploitation of our stage by American capital. Otherwise our stage would change at a greater speed. Still the difference in the way Shakespeare is produced in England is an index of the change. When we produce *Hamlet* as it is produced at the Theatre of Art, Moscow, we shall have traversed the whole distance between the way of Martha and the way of Mary as far as the stage is concerned.

XI

THE ECCLESIASTICAL CHURCH AND THE LIVING CHURCH

STRANGE that there should be a feud between the Church and the Theatre! They were originally one and the same, and as it is the Church remains a holy theatre where day after day is enacted the same holy mystery. In passing: how much nearer the Theatre is brought to the Church by the constant repetition of the great classical and mystical dramas such as *Hamlet*. The reason for the religious distrust of the Theatre which exists in all countries, — in England in the Free Churches; in Russia in the Orthodox Church, — lies in the degradation of the Theatre, the making it a show of wild beasts, a stage for indecent dances and comic songs, an arena for combats of athletes. The common townspeople are not and never can be the pupils of Hypatia. They will have their indecencies and vulgarities, wild beasts, acrobats, invitation to sin. The showman has usurped the place of the mystagogue, and money-making has replaced religious service or service to Art and culture as a motive of theatrical production. The Theatre to-day, even if it aspire to

be serious, has unclean hands, and the Church not unfairly regards it as part of the stock-in-trade of the evil one.

An interesting exemplification of the relation of Church and Stage is furnished by Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. To the Christian, to look at the dance of Salome is to glance into the charnel-house where all is decay and worms and death, and to see there the head of one of the saints with celestial aureole. But the dramatist has turned the interest to the dance itself and made you say that it is interesting: he has dwelt on the jewels, the crimsons, the thick lips, the luscious movements. Every effort is made to make you agree with Herod, and the best way to do that is to suggest to your body and soul the same feelings towards the dancer on the stage as Herod felt towards the daughter of his brother's wife — so that you would give her anything, even the pure body of the saint that is in your keeping. He would give you a place with the worms and the spirit of decay, and let you end as Herod ended, eaten by the worms at the last. No aureole for you!

But the Church suggests the aureole for you, and if *Salome* were presented as a mystery play the whole interest of the populace would be directed towards the sainthood of John the Baptist. When Oscar Wilde's *Salome* was produced at St. Petersburg, Russia made short work of it. On the first night, at the first

public performance, some one stood up in the middle of a scene and shouted in a bass voice:

"*Spustee zanavess!*" "Lower the curtain!" and the curtain was lowered; and *Salome* has not been repeated there from that day to this.

Who it was said this is rather a mystery, but it was doubtless some one who had the voice or the ear of Orthodoxy. Russia probably gained by this prohibition. A pity, however, that many other plays quite as injurious are allowed their way to the perversion of private morals and the corruption of public taste. Indeed it would be a gain to Russia if the Church would cease looking at the Stage from a merely ecclesiastical point of view. The fault of the clergy is their pride in their own order and their institutions. The clergy, ministers of the living Church of Christ, should in nature be the humblest of people, so humble in fact, so meek and unresentful, that it would be necessary occasionally to protect them from the enmity of the secular world. As it is, in their pomp, they are proud. They despise the Stage and often prohibit plays on quite wrong grounds, incidentally depriving not only the theatre and the public, but the Church also, of something helpful to the cause of Eastern Christianity and of all real Russian values. The prohibition of Andreef's *Anathema*, performed at the Theatre of Art in Moscow, is an example. Though this prohibition was at the instance of the Archbishop

of Moscow the play was in essential teaching profoundly helpful to Eastern Christianity. It was written by a man who belonged to the revolutionary movement, but it was only the more remarkable and the more powerful thereby. It was in substance a refutation of Westernism and the ideals after which secularist Russia was striving. A pious and philanthropic Jew inheriting immense wealth, millions of American dollars, resolved in his simplicity to save the world, feeding the hungry, clothing the ragged, giving money to the needy, medical aid to the suffering. The drama shows the futility of this dream, and at the end the mob of enraged and suffering humanity stone the philanthropist to death. Not by material but by spiritual things could their sufferings be assuaged.

The archbishop who stopped it was probably never in a theatre in his life, and no doubt condemned it on hearsay, and from a complete misapprehension of the significance of the drama.

The Church of the future in England, and probably in Russia, will have to come into alliance with what may be called the right side of the theatre. For occasionally in the theatre people worship as much as others do in the Church. Many young people whose families have lapsed from the Church find their religious life functionised in the book, the drama, the opera, the symphony. They are not *communicants* in the literal sense, they are outside the church walls and the

shut church doors, but they are inside the living Church. They have a common word with people inside church walls. Their chorus of praise swells from the other side of the walls, and in some countries the secular chorus of praise to God has considerably more volume than the official ecclesiastical chorus. Somehow in church one rather resents the choir, especially in the *Te Deum*, when they are singing it to some "God-forsaken" curious tune that a pedant musician has chosen. It is good when the whole church can lift one great voice. And outside the church the greater congregation rather resents the church-goers. They would sing *Te Deum* also.

The relation of Church and Stage exhibits the confusion of religious values at present existing. The same confusion exists with regard to the Church and Literature — many of the great classics of Russian literature, like Gogol's *Dead Souls*, the monks would regard it a sin to read. The ecclesiastical Church takes no useful stand with regard to what is helpful, what harmful, in past and present literature; it is left for the living Church to find out for itself and do what it can without organisation. Even in the domain of Holy Writ there is a confusion of what the living Church believes, and what mere ecclesiasticism lays down. At least one fundamental idea in Christianity has been overlaid, and, as it were, frustrated, by the Church itself — the idea of the Holy Ghost. The

Holy Ghost has been conventionalised and made terrible. It has become the most inscrutable and awe-inspiring aspect of the Trinity, whereas it should be the most familiar and consoling, Christ saying good-bye to his disciples in that last long sweet talk where He calls them friends, tells them that after He is gone away from them there will come a new consolation, the vision of Truth.

"I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive . . . the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. . . . If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

And in the cross-examination before Pilate, Jesus

said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews. . . . To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth."

Therein lies the true idea of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit — it is the vision of Heavenly Truth that gives the lie to worldly values, worldly truth. By virtue of this Holy Spirit the blind see, though they have no eyes, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the dead live, mortality itself is disproved. The mysteries of the Pentecostal mitres of the gift of tongues, and the conventionalised notion of what is called the "sin against the Holy Ghost" have stood in the way of the simple and beautiful conception of the comforting vision of Truth. The Church, with its keys of heaven and hell, and its arrogation of the power of anathema and excommunication, has preferred to lay its emphasis on those texts which may seem to imply the dreadfulness of offence against a certain more inscrutable aspect of the Trinity. There is nothing in the Gospels but love of man, forgiveness of man, and nothing is more pitiful than the man who, having a glimpse of the Truth, yet denies it or wilfully confuses it with magic or unclean power.

But the *Filioque* clause of the Creed is alone sufficient to exemplify the confusion of ecclesiasticism and the living Church. There are many who think that the

two Churches of England and Russia are kept apart by this clause alone. England holds that the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, proceeds from the Father and from the Son, Russia that it proceeds from the Father alone. Russia's basis is St. John xv. 26, ". . . the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me." "What does it matter how it is put?" cries the living Church. But ecclesiastical pedantry is strongly entrenched, and whenever the question of the intercommunion of the two Churches is mentioned there arises that fatal phrase — "*Filioque* — and from the Son."

"Does not one of your thirty-nine articles lay down that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and from the Son?* And is not assent to the thirty-nine articles obligatory upon your clergy? Why then. . . ." To which one can only answer in one's heart:

> Thirty-nine articles,
> Ye precious little particles,
> And did God really make the world by you?

The same confusion exists with regard to the Church and Life. That which the living Church of Christ possesses is a spiritual communion, not a set of dogmas or a set of points of ecclesiastical law. If a man is really touched to go to church, if he has the impulse from the heart, it is not in order that he may hear dogma. He goes to blend his voice and his thoughts with the voice and the thoughts of humanity in hymn

and prayer. But to-day many misconceptions arise. Carlyle could not go to church because the sermon bored him. Many stay away from churches because they can't stand so-and-so's sermon. As if the sermon were part of the service! In old days the sermons were often delivered outside the churches after the service was done. The priest came through the worshippers, went out into the church square, and rising to a platform or "outside pulpit" harangued the everyday crowd. The function of the Church service is not to be a frame to a sermon, even a clever or profound or inspiring sermon. Its function is praise.

A Jew writing for an important Russian newspaper about the state of the Church of England remarks that "dogmas make many leave the Church, and those who stay remain to preach ethics," and he goes on to praise ethics as the function of the Church, leaving out of account and evidently having no notion of the Church as a temple of religion, a place of communion and aspiration. Surely the preaching ethics is a work begun by parents and confirmed by the schoolmaster. Christ did not die on the Cross or forgive the thief who recognised Him in order to preach "Thou shalt not steal!" Yet such a confusion of ideas remains in the mind even of the cultured.

Still the whole world and the universe is an orchestra praising God, and, remembering that, it is impossible to say there is real confusion or final confusion. It is as

impossible to classify and show series of like things, for the imagination tells you that every instrument in the orchestra is diverse. Hence I am open to misconception when I write of confusion or when I classify, as for instance when I talk of Marthas and Marys. There is confusion and there is order. Nothing is fixed, all is in motion, the kaleidoscope is ever moving. So it would be wrong to say that all who were in the way of Martha were in towns working for the poor, or that all in the way of Mary were away in the desert saving their souls at the feet of the Master, or that the priests in their orders and vestments with their processions and grandeur were all in the way of Martha, or that the hermits of the desert did not upon occasion come like Paphnutius to Alexandria to save Thaïs, the dancing-girl. The sisters love one another; and though it is not written in the Gospels, there were certainly occasions when Mary might have been seen cumbered about with many things whilst Martha sat with her Lord.

XII

WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH

THE purely Eastern aspect of the Church is the way of Mary, the spiritual, meditative, introspective, mystical way, and this is ever the strength of the whole Church. It is even the strength of the Protestant churches, though there the spiritual life is more private. In Orthodoxy the voice speaks from the desert right into the ears of the everyday mundane crowd. The people are enjoined against sloth in the name of the fathers of the desert. They sing their hymns in praise of those who have overcome. They are encompassed round about with "the crowd of witnesses," the ikon faces and frescoed saints of the church walls, the thousands of those who have died in the Lord looking on whilst we run with patience the race that is set before us.

Our work is in the world, our passion is for the realisation of good worldly hopes. We pray for the King, the Emperor; we own a true allegiance to a God-guided Cæsar, and are ready to render to such a Cæsar the things that are his. We pray for the administrative bodies and for Parliament, may they go forward to the raising of the poor, the healing of

the sick, the raising to a life of knowledge those who are dead in ignorance. We pray for our fellowman and for ourselves. We band ourselves in a Christian order, and confirm in ourselves the resolve to fight against sin, ugliness, unhappiness. We promise to give time, to give money, to work for the Cause. This is all in the way of Martha. But these thoughts and prayers are made in a temple where the light is the light of candles placed before shrines of the Unseen. A vision accompanies the Christian man. Though his passion is towards the things of this world he is encompassed and enveloped by the atmosphere of another world. The remembrance remains his that Cæsar is not God, nor Cæsar's officers the angels of God, nor this world the real world, that the poor we have always with us, that our true citizenship is of another realm.

The work of Martha fails, fails again; the poor multiply, sickness becomes a plague and scourge from God, the ignorant increase, peace becomes war, the progressive work of centuries topples down like Babel, kings or emperors become killed, allegiances of millions are changed, famous Christian workers and organisers who have given their whole life to the Cause go out to death with grey hairs, all their life-work made as nought before their eyes. The passionate soldier-saint goes out in failure. The lukewarm mediocre man and the cheerful happy-go-lucky mortals, the ordinary folk, the witty ones, the dull ones, the run of mankind

as we call them, also go out, looking at the failure of ideas to which they have vaguely or earnestly given assent. But Christianity does not fail. Thousands of years hence this young religion of Christianity will be more triumphant, splendid, vital, than it is to-day. And this by virtue of the mystical and transcendental aspect of the word.

The service of the Church is more than a consecration of duty. It is a bearing witness to the Truth, a watching till He come, an expectancy, a getting into position for a great procession, a carrying of banners and emblems, a joining in a universal hymn sung not only by ourselves but by all the dead. The light of the Church is the light of transfiguration, not the light of common day, it is the light of the halo round the saint's head.

You enter a church, such a temple, for instance, as the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow. At a step you are in the precincts of a different world. You have overstepped a frontier line, and the language has changed, just as when in Europe you cross a boundary and the language changes, say from German to Russian. The people are looking a different way, not Westward as to the Emperor but Eastward as to God. You are in a new kingdom; but as your thoughts go back to the street you left you realise that the kingdom is not from thence.

The faces in the ikons are not the faces of men. The figures are twisted and strange. One asks:

"Why did not the Byzantine painters paint the truth? There never were men looking as these men. Why these copper-coloured and flame-coloured faces? Why the unearthly expression in eyebrows and eyes? Men never looked like that." The answer is: the early Christian painters did not wish to paint earthly truth. Their object was to indicate the unearthly nature of man, his citizenship of another world. They wrote into the features of every saint, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." This is one of the earliest traditions in the Christian Church, and has been handed down from generation to generation in the books of *ikonopis* or ikon-painting. There is a way to paint a Christian saint, and that way has to be followed in the Eastern churches. He must be represented as a witness unto the Truth, a face that at least at last owns no allegiance to the monarch in the West, but only to the God in the East, the face of an archangel or of one who sings continuously, " Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come." One may belong to a mighty empire, but the citizenship of those within the Church is of a mightier and grander and vaster empire. The thrill of the new national hymn is the greater, the characteristic uniforms and robes have the more reverence in their associations.

The vestments of the priests astonish one. They are gorgeous past belief. Whence comes that gold

brocade? It was cut in another world. At least, that is its intention, that is what it would signify. Who are they in white robes? Why do the priests at the altar walk so stately? What is that new tempo to which they have learned to move and to swing the censer?

And the voice of the clergy, that unearthly bass, that profound groaning and seeking of notes that man does not utter, that voice as of Jesus commanding the soul of the dead Lazarus to return to the awful and dreadful corpse? The service in the Slavonic tongue, not in the everyday tongue. . . .

All these things bear witness unto the Truth and are the emblems of our allegiance to the kingdom of Christ, marks of our other citizenship, the visible emblems and symbols of our hope, our love and passion. Hence it is possible to sing with angels and archangels. Failure in the work of Martha loses significance as failure. Failure is even good, it is one more sign, an involuntary ritual, telling of our truer destiny.

So though the way of Mary is consummated in the desert, in the cell, in giving up the world, in pilgrimaging, praying, fasting, and only a few can necessarily take to that way, yet it is that way which speaks triumphantly in the Church. The great majority of human beings must always remain behind "cumbered about with many things," though loved by the Master they will not be able to sell everything, take up the

Cross and follow to the place of the Skull. They will keep the commandments of Christ and enter on set occasions the temples we have set up. They will receive confirmation in their life and in the love of the Lord, they will pray for what they will, and confess themselves. They will praise and be in communion. They will recognise that they belong to another kingdom, and their hearts will swell with the triumphant and passionate affirmation of the Godhead which each finds in his poor conditional existence as man. The way of Martha and the way of Mary.

XIII

THE FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD

At Easter I was at my old home, Vladikavkaz, and on the second Tuesday after Easter Sunday went through one of the most characteristic of Russian holidays — Krasnagorka. It is half-Christian, half-pagan — a festival of spring and of new life, but celebrated almost entirely in graveyards and cemeteries. At Krasnagorka almost the whole population of the town goes on an outing or a picnic — to the cemetery.

Early in the morning I received a message from a Russian friend, "Come to our church; you'll see an interesting sight." The church was crowded, but I got in, for nobody objects to your pushing. It was an unusual service. The whole centre of the floor of the church, a space of some twenty feet by seven, was covered with napkins in which lay lumps of cake, brightly coloured eggs, basins of rice and strawberry jam, basins of rice and raisins. In each basin, and there were some hundreds of them, a lighted wax candle was stuck in the rice and gave a little flame, and beside each lay the little red book in which the peasant records the names of his relatives as they die.

"What is it all for?" I asked. "It is the food for the dead," my friend answered.

A priest and a deacon were standing at the near end of the spread of illuminated food, and they read aloud from sheaves of papers the names of dead persons whom members of the church had wished to have remembered. Each person who had brought in food for sanctification brought also a slip of paper with the names of his dead. It took hours to read them all out, and when at last the task was finished, the deacon took a smoking censer, and walking round the feast flung incense over it, the chains of the censer rattling as he made the sign of the Cross. We sang once more the festal hymn of Easter, *Christos voskrese iz mertvikh* — "Christ is risen from the dead" — sung at every service until Ascension, and then, after kissing the cross in the priest's hand, each person sought out his special basin of rice and pieces of cake and bowl of coloured eggs and moved out of the church.

At the door of the church stood many beggars, six or seven bearded, tattered, and dirty old men, and a score or so of women and children. All the old men had their mouths open, and each worshipper, as he made his exit, helped a beggar liberally to rice and jam, scooping out great spoonfuls with wooden spoons and poking them into the open, waiting mouths. Many beggars had cotton bags hanging from their necks, and into these were promiscuously flung spoonfuls of

rice and raisins, eggs, biscuit, cake. The beggars were told to eat what was given them in the name of the dead. My friend fed at least ten beggars before she left the church, and gave eggs and bits of cake, but she did not give all that she had. A great quantity was reserved for a spread in the graveyard.

Many cabs were waiting at the church door, and the worshippers stepped into them with their napkins of sanctified food, and drove to the cemeteries of the town. From ten o'clock in the morning until sunset, the cemeteries were as thronged with people as Hampstead Heath on Whit-Monday.

Nearly every grave in a Russian churchyard has seats round it, and it is possible to go to the family grave and sit down and think a little, or pray a little, when you wish. I went to the graveyard where my friend's sister lies buried, an acre of cypress and pine and gentle mounds, where the dank earth seems like bedclothes laid over the dead. To-day this wide melancholy collection of green mounds and wooden crosses was alive with the laughter and songs of children. On the heaps of mouldering earth samovars were humming, and little candles gleamed against a background of lilac blossoms and spring flowers.

My friend and I sat down. The mother of the dead one came, deep in crape and laden with gifts. We planted our candles, and on this grave as on all the others round about the wan flames flickered. We

took bright-coloured eggs — our Easter eggs dyed purple and crimson and brown, — dug holes in the mould with our fingers, buried the eggs, covered their brightness over with mould again. Then we put down slices of Easter cake on the grave, and emptied there saucers of rice — that the dead one might share in. We sat on the crazy wooden seats around, and looked at the earth and were silent.

The mother went away to find a priest, and presently brought a purple-cloaked greybeard to sing over the grave and burn incense. His red and wrinkled face was all red and fresh from the open air, for he had been in the graveyard all day singing over the graves. He was tired, but he raised his head and his voice and called forth his little memorial prayer in an antique musical bass: "Grant to her who has passed away, O Christ, to obtain Thy unspeakable glory. . . ." "Give rest, O Christ, to the soul of Thy servant. . . ." We all stood around, silent and awe-stricken, and listened and crossed ourselves, and kissed the cross in the priest's hand.

He received a rouble, then went away to another grave; beggars besought us; and as if they had not been satisfied at the church door, but were taking enough to last them a whole year, they received helping after helping of rice and cake and eggs. This, I felt, was the great beggar's day in the year. They were important people. They were necessary to the

feast. Strange that they should appear as proxies for the dead and eat for them. A beautiful reminder that in the living we find all our dead again.

We had stood to meet the priest and to give the beggars the food we had brought, so now that the beggars had eaten all the rice and raisins and rice and jam and had gone farther to eat at other graves, we sat down again in the still presence of the green mound and we talked of the virtues of the dead one, of how old she would have been and how beloved she was, and of how often she had been remembered, and how soon we should join her. Evidently the mother assumed that what she said was heard by her whose body lay in the earth. We were all quietly joyful — not sad. We had the spirit of children making believe; we had also the calm faith and knowledge of elders — that there is no death, that those who have passed out of sight have not ceased but are alive for evermore. I felt the Russians, and indeed mankind altogether, to be very dear at this festival; they were doing things that must touch those invisible ones who know more than we do and look on, bring tears to the eyes of angels, and not as often in man's history and the spectacle of his civilisation and abomination call down the wrath of higher powers.

We talked . . . and then as we became silent again we heard the music of man's life, and listened with our souls.

. . . . . .

At some graves there was boisterous jollity, at others terrible anguish and grief. Near where we sat a woman lay moaning on the grave of her husband, her red tear-washed cheeks and her lips on the earth; and she called to him with sobs, telling him all that had happened during the year, how the children were, how often they had thought of him. It was heart-rending to listen to her. And yet, mingled with her terrible lament, came the sound of mumbling priests, the buzz of conversation, the laughter of children wrestling among the graves and gambling in the eggs that had been given them, the tinkle of the guitar and of light songs, the strains of the concertina.

We walked by winding ways across the grave-yard and saw many an old man and woman knocking at the door of the earth they would soon enter, dropping placid tears and thinking what it would be like some years hence when they would be under the earth and this festive crowd of live beings above, candle-lighting, feasting, singing, thinking, praying. And there were young men and women walking arm-in-arm, looking brightly into one another's eyes, strengthening their bonds of love and of life. There were also little children, boys and girls, thoughtless, indifferent to death and to the dead, waiting for the older people to go away, so that they might forage among the graves and dig up again the red and blue eggs that had been buried there.

"Are they allowed to do that?" I asked in horror.

"Yes," said the sister. "Every one knows that directly evening comes and we elders go home the poor children will come and dig up the eggs and take them away, and take also the wild flowers we have brought. Let them! It is quite good that they should. You know it is the festival of spring and of life." I realised that she was right. It is the way to give to the dead — give to the beggars and to the children. The dead get what we send them, surely.

. . . . . .

Strange to notice in this acre of God some graves that had not been visited this day — old graves. I reflected on many a country walk in England, culminating in a visit to an old church and graveyard, and the tracing of the names and dates of people long since passed away. It is somewhat strange. When we are in an old graveyard and looking at the graves of people who have died centuries ago we feel, instead of grief, a sort of quiet satisfaction, and that even when those whose burial is recorded are of our own name and family. We dare not even contrast our feeling with the poignancy that is attached to a new grave — with its garish stone, fresh clods, and wilted flowers.

I often wonder where the dead are. Neither in heaven or hell, I suppose, nor waiting for a last day

and dreadful judgment, nor going through the circles of purgatory, nor just simply under the earth. . . .

We know that they exist and are alive, and the knowledge is of that more certain kind that does not spring from our mentality but is felt in our bodies. The grief we have when sons or daughters or fathers or mothers die is a *physical* anguish, and is akin to the pains of birth. Some one has been cut off, deceased — cut off from us. Even in a dream to lose one of those *nearest* to us is to suffer a sort of physical mortification, to weep senselessly, lose control of nerves, and be prostrated.

The fact is we are all one. Even the death of some one who is quite remote jars upon the soul.

We were talking one evening of death and some one said to me:

> ". . . to die and go we know not where,
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,

— that is what I fear in death. They tell me I am a pagan, but I feel the dead are under the earth. I hate to think of lying in a damp churchyard and decaying all alone, through days and nights and spring rains, summer storms, autumn winds, winter snows. The rain must be terrible for the dead — to be all wet and old like a fallen leaf."

Another said he did not mind the idea of lying under the earth in the rain and changing into mould. It was gentle and restful. And it was beautiful too,

for flowers would rise from where the body slept. One recalled the lines:

> Oh, never blows the rose so red
> As where some buried Cæsar lies;

and another, the beautiful lines of Nash:

> Worms feed on Hector brave,
> Dust hath closèd Helen's eyes.

But to my mind came some words said to me by Algernon Blackwood the first day we met:

"You know we all came out of the earth; somehow or other we have got to get back to her. The Earth is not dead, she is living."

. . . . . .

He was right. And the dead under the earth are in living care. All that is is One and is beautiful. Life and death make a unity. Everything in the world and without it, in the past and in the future, is to me a unity, and I am calm and happy in it. In me, in you, are all the dead — they crowd behind my eyes and look out, one above another's shoulders like the people at a great spectacle. There are myriads of them — I hold them. In this sense they are under the earth, in that you and I are earth, and they are in us, and look out of us. We are all windows through which there glance at times faces of each of all there ever have been.

III

THE DESERT AND THE WORLD

I

A CHAIN OF HAPPENINGS

WINTER changing to summer, I gave up life in towns and set off upon a new adventure. In May I was looking at Bokhara and the gay-coloured meditative Mohammedan world. In June I was tramping across Russian Central Asia the way the pioneers go to find new land and new life. My road companions were people who had given up the old and were seeking the new — not further West but further East. By July I had crossed to southern Siberia, and was away on the Altai Mountains when the War with Germany broke out. In the autumn I returned in the wake of the mobilised Russian army, and was in Moscow during the first month of its enthusiasm, then at Libau and Vilna and Warsaw, at Petrograd, and home to England. I wrote my book on the War. All the winter I wrote and spoke for Russia. Life resolved itself into lectures, speeches, addresses, meetings, and all with the view of making Russia and especially Russian Christianity better known in England. Time flies in such a way, and very quickly it was May again and time to set out upon a new adventure. So I

took up my quest of Martha and Mary once more and set out for Egypt, hoping to be able to go from Egypt to Russia the way Christianity came to her. For a great deal of Russian Christianity came from the Egyptian deserts and had its source in the life led there by the hermits during the first five centuries after Christ.

Doubtless the quiet life of the hermit saints had more power to change the world than all the clangorous wars of their time, than the talk and the gossip and the cheering and the hooting, than the foes laid low or tyrants raised to power. There is a beautiful passage of Nietzsche — "The thoughts that change the world come on doves' feet. The world revolves round the inventors of new values, noiselessly it revolves." So if we would know what sort of a Europe is going to be, or of Russia what sort of an East she will be —

> Oh! Russia, what sort of an East will you be,
> The East of Xerxes or of Christ?

it is necessary to seek the ideas of to-morrow in the quiet places where they lurk unseen, not in the clash of the Great War. The trenches are pungent with fumes, the earth itself deaf from the sound of artillery, both Nature and Man's work lie blasted and ruined along a long but narrow stretch of land — that is the front, the War, the biggest and only thing in the world. But I must leave it and go southward and eastward to the places where ideas are born.

In May when I left England the streets of London were flocking with merry crowds; there was a vigorous popular optimism in the air. At night the Soho restaurants were packed, the theatres ablaze with the glamour of success. Paris was different. One European capital was bright; another silent, vigilant, and clad in serious garb. The enemy was encamped and militant and near. South to Marseilles, to the vivacious, light-hearted, southern port! The ship by which I sailed for Egypt was painted an austere leaden colour to resemble a man-of-war or armed merchantman, and so deceive the enemy lurking under the waves — a masked ship. We were delayed a week in the port through lack of labouring hands; for every one had gone to the War. We watched liner after liner go out of the harbour laden with young soldiers going to fight the Turk and win Constantinople.

My slow ship left the land and slipped away through the night as it should, towards Egypt, unhasting, unresting, over the calm shadowy Mediterranean . . . an almost fourth-dimensional progress, a mysterious magical journey. The stars looked through soft vigils and possessed a mystery; they dreamed over us as we went. We disturbed nothing; we went on. I sat up in the prow of the vessel and looked forward — the eye of the boat.

> . . . Everything is akin to me
> That dwells in the land of mystery.

The ship is masked; its colour is the colour of the waves at night. The ship is pleased. A shadowy blue-grey ship going forward calmly, equably, yet triumphantly, ever gently forward, towards the unknown, the mysterious. . . .

II

THE HERMITS

THE first effort of the Apostles towards the establishment of Christianity was along the way of Martha — the sharing out of the money and the starting of a sort of Christian-socialist state. But life taught them that this was impracticable, and they and all the early Christians soon found themselves working and living and praying in an altogether different way — driven into the wilderness, stoned out of cities, hounded into gaol, faced with the horrors of torture or barbarous execution. There were soon more Christians in the desert places of the earth, living in caves and in forests, than there were in the towns and villages. Some fled from persecution, others were driven by the Spirit; and no doubt all, when they found themselves cut off from the world, began to share in the meditative idea of Christianity. They obtained the consolation of wanderers, and found a new significance in the promise of the Comforter. They had visions; they met the resurrected spirits of those who had died in the Lord. The strange life they had to live brought a romantic mystery into the possibilities of the road

and the outside world, so that when one met a stranger there was the doubt that he might be an angel, that he might even be the risen Lord Himself. The heavens opened, and sweet music accompanied the vision of the Grail. The stigmata appeared on the hands and bodies of those who had attained to unity with Christ.

Yet those who went out into the wilderness, alike those who fled persecution and those who went out voluntarily to seek and be alone with God, were tempted "of the devil," as they phrased it. The town and the world which they wished to overcome tempted them back. They had left behind in "the world" fathers, mothers, brides, children, friends, money, position, pleasure. They lived on locusts and wild honey and grains and roots — and they longed for the good meat of the city. They were ragged, unwashed, bruised, unkempt — they longed for the freshness of the bath, white linen, and clean clothes. Their bones ached and they were tired — they longed for soft beds. They were solitary and longed for company, longed especially for the company of women. And the devil who tempted them was a dragon that could never be killed, which, slain, but changed to a different shape. The temptation was put forward in new guise, and the lure of sin more subtly baited. They entered into the temptation of Jesus as they entered also into his sufferings.

They drew men unto them. All those whose minds were troubled by the monstrous woman — Babylon — thought of the Christian solitude in the desert. It became a not infrequent phenomenon — the going into the desert "to save one's soul." The wild places of the earth began to have names and fame. Hermits lived in places where no one had ever lived before, and the curious came out to see them. By their spiritual virtues they made the desert, which was barren in the material sense, blossom as the rose.

The caves in the mountains by the Dead Sea filled with anchorites, and the holy men looked upon the dead salt lake that had once been the gay world of Sodom and Gomorrah. The mountain supposed to be the mountain of Christ's temptations became honeycombed with the abodes of world-forsakers. "If a man does not say to himself in his innermost heart, God and I, we are alone in the world; he will never find rest," said one, and betook himself to Mount Sinai. The Virgin Mary sailing in a boat with St. Thomas and St. John was wrecked off the coast of Macedonia and miraculously washed ashore on the mountain of Athos; and in due course there appeared on the strange uninhabited mountain an antique Greek, lean, long-haired, unutterably devout, and he lived in a cave and meditated on the Mother of God. Another followed and another, till a laura was founded.

The hermits gave Christianity a new bias. One has only to compare an ascetic's dream, the majesty and the mystery of the Revelation of St. John, with the sweet reasonableness of the Gospels . . . "A sower went forth to sow," and the like . . . to see how great is the change in the spirit of the Church under the influence of the anchorites. Such a sentence as — "To him that overcometh I will give of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it," comes straight from the desert and is part and parcel of the spiritual fervour of the early Church.

The hermit based his life on Christ's wanderings in the wilderness and His denial of the world, on the idea of bearing the Cross, and on the promised second coming of Christ. As Christ renounced the power of changing stones into bread, so they renounced the power of bread, the feeding of the hungry, *i.e.* service in the world, the way of Martha. As Christ refused the throne of Cæsar when the devil was ready to show him the way to obtain it, so they refused to try to establish Christ's kingdom in a material form. They denied all material power — denied that the power of Cæsar was real power, that physical force had power, that money had power. St. Arsenius, the anchorite, was offered all the revenues of Egypt by the Emperor Arcadius and asked to use them for the help

of the poor, the hermits, and the monks; but Arsenius refused, saying that such work would be worldly and was not for him. The same Arsenius inherited a great fortune, his cousin's estate, but refused it.

"When did my cousin die?"

"Two months ago," he was told.

"Oh, then the estate is not mine, for I died long before that," said Arsenius.

He had died to the world, and to money among other worldly things.

The hermits also denied the physical senses — our ordinary sight, hearing, touching. . . . "Grieve not that thou art without what even flies and gnats possess," said Antony, the father of Egyptian hermits to blind Didymus; "rejoice that through thy physical blindness thy spiritual sight has become more clear." The hermits took upon themselves oaths of silence, went into remote places where was the most abject barrenness of earth, the utter negation of all physical life and material power. Not content with the privations of the Sahara they went into abominable marshes like the soda swamps of Nitria, where they mortified even the most innocent of the senses, the sense of smell. They strove to be as it were dead in all the physical body and limbs, and in the physical senses. "Unless a man imagines to himself that he has been lying for three years in the grave and under the earth, he will never die to

himself," said Moses the Ethiopian, a simple negro anchorite, who though he seemed black in the body was all white in the soul.

In this denial they did things which seem fantastic to the modern world. They dug their graves in advance and lived in them till they died. They stood on one leg, the foot of the other leg on their knee, their arms outstretched as if crucified to the air; they climbed to the height of ancient pillars and remained there praying for years. Pachomius is said to have prayed for days together, standing with outstretched arms as immovably as if his body had been fastened to a cross. His eyes were lifted upward at a strange angle and were full of light, he gazed in fixed rapture as if his eyes were resting on a celestial vision. In this Pachomius praying thus an artist might show a picture of what the hermit stood for. These hermits were not foolish; they were mighty and wonderful like the living word of God itself. They were living hieroglyphics.

It must be remembered that Christianity had to overcome a world of philosophy, had to absorb all that lay in the philosophy of the East, in the religions of Egypt and Greece, and of the Jews. Thanks to the hermits Christianity took to itself all that was vital in all extant ideas. By the life and death of Jesus the seed of Christianity was sown, thrown into the spiritual life of the world, and instead

of springing up immediately and bearing fruit, it sent its strength downward like the seed of a mighty tree; it grew deeper into the spiritual world rather than higher, became more mysterious and secret rather than manifest and clear.

To-day Christianity is of different portent. But in those days the enthusiasts, visionaries, and saints did not clearly know what Christianity was: Christianity was not clear to them; they sensed it, it had possession of them, they were in a state of exaltation because of it. Christianity was growing through them, growing deeper. Their intellectual conceptions of what Christianity was and was not were often quite mistaken — but the vision they could not express was authentic. The new idea was in the air. Hence, for instance, the gift of tongues. People listening to the apostles were caught by the idea, even though the language spoken was foreign to them. Christianity was imparted by enthusiasm alone, by the gait, the gesture, the expression of countenance of the believer, the living hieroglyphic; and it did not matter that the apostles spoke one language and the listener another. The spirit of truth sat in the faces of the apostles like tongues of fire and spoke for them. In those days many who had never seen an apostle dreamed and became Christians, heard a voice from heaven, were struck blind by the heavenly vision

like Saul, whose mind on the way to Damascus was far from Christianity, but whose soul was so near that even at the stoning of Stephen there could have been but the thinnest partition between him and the great splendour. Many people in those days went about in strange apprehension — as if the world were coming to an end, and quite truly a world, that of the Romans, was coming to an end — and suddenly they were aware of the mystery, and without a word of proselytism gave up everything and went to the desert.

Needless to say, the number of Christians grew, and the reputation of the Christians grew. Persecution soon ceased, and presently it became such a mark of distinction to be a Christian that all the mundane crowd came in and called itself Christian. Some of them were Christian in name only, and their children in superstitious obedience. Even till to-day Christianity is cumbered about with the descendants of this mass of people, the great crowd who vaguely assent to the term Christian but have only a remote conception of what Christianity really is. The riotous and lascivious population of Alexandria supporting worldly Cyril, though Christian in name, was nothing less than an obstacle to Christianity, an opaque mass between the light shining in the desert and the north whither the light should shine. Still, when "the world" came

in and called itself Christian there were a great many who took their conversion seriously, and of these, many went to the desert and schooled themselves to become hermits, tried the life to see what it was like. Ammon and his bride were dressed, ready for their nuptial festivities, when the revelation came to them, and on their wedding-day they resolved to forego the worldly tie of marriage and live in the desert as holy bachelor and virgin. They dwelt in Nitria and entertained thousands of young men and women of the rich and cultured world and meditated on the hermit's life, Ammon receiving the men at his cell, his bride the women at hers. After some time Ammon, who was rich, founded a monastery, and he and his bride agreed to part, she going to a distant place to continue her work, he remaining to establish his. Ammon became abbot of the monastery, and under him were four thousand monks; this was in the evil-smelling swamp of Nitria, on the fringe of the Sahara, some forty miles west of what is now the Alexandria-Soudan railway. People began to flock to the desert. There were tens of thousands of hermits and monks and consecrated virgins waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom of the Church. These Christian converts gave to the desert the largest human population it has ever had. There were four hundred monasteries in the desert of Nitria alone. It was possible to invent such an

anecdote about the younger Macarius the anchorite as that some one gave him a bunch of grapes and he, being so altruistic, took it to a neighbouring anchorite, that anchorite to another, and so on, till the grapes had made the whole circuit of the Sahara and came back to Macarius again, preserved all the way by the virtue of the self-denying hermits.

The desert had an atmosphere of Christianity. Many aged solitaries like Arsenius and Paphnutius took to the road with sacred missions. The hermit's life was not always continuous cave-dwelling. St. Arsenius, a gracious genius, went to the councils of Emperors; we read of men like Paphnutius returning to "the world" at the obedience of the heavenly vision and saving people whom the Lord needed. Thaïs the courtesan of Alexandria was taken from the midst of her gay life and brought to a cell in the desert. The anchorites found for her this beautiful prayer, "Thou who formedst me have mercy," and Thaïs was saved, though she died. And she was numbered among the Marys. No hermit setting out upon the road took away money with him or had thought for the morrow. That was a golden rule in their ways; money counted for nothing. Serapion the Sindonite sold himself as a slave in order that he might save those who were slaves of the world; and he put the money he received as the price of himself in a pit and covered it with earth.

He was a perfect servant, and by his humility and sweetness touched the heart of his master and mistress, who soon learned to say the Lord's Prayer with him and were converted to Christianity. One day they said to Serapion: "We are unworthy that you should be our servant and slave, take back, we pray you, your freedom!"

Serapion replied that he thanked God for the day when his mission was accomplished, and thanked his master and mistress for his freedom. Then he went to the pit where the purchase money was buried and brought it to his two converted friends. They were much astonished, and implored Serapion to keep the money. But he refused though they wept, and he set off for the desert once more, cared for by the Lord.

Nothing counted in Egypt except Christianity. Monasteries and churches sprang up all over the land. The rich women who gave up all for Christ's sake gave their jewels to the adornment of the screens and altars in the desert churches, and it was thought to be the best place for jewels, *fruitlessly sacrificed* to the spiritual. The wealthy bequeathed their estates to the Church, hoping thereby to find grace in heaven; and the Church employed the wealth so gained for the building of new monasteries and the employment of Byzantine painters and metal workers, for the upkeep of their institutions, and for alms. It seems the new wealth did not

altogether spoil the life in the desert. Egypt was particularly suited to be the mysterious source of contemplative Christianity and its spiritual power — the greatest deserts in the world, the emptiest landscape, the incomprehensible Nile coming out of the depths of mysterious and untrodden Africa, the ancient monuments of religion, the Sphinx, the pyramids, the obelisks . . . the oldest domain of man, a land of tombs. But for the Mahommedan hordes Egypt must have remained the true holy land of Christianity. As it is, the life lived in Egypt at that time is certainly the spiritual inspiration of the Eastern Church till this day.

It is somewhat astonishing to reflect that in the early centuries of our era Christianity in Egypt was alone with the ancient monuments of Egypt, and that those monuments were in a considerably greater state of grandeur than they are to-day. There was very little robbing of the tombs and destruction of old buildings before the coming of Saracens — those terrible robbers and destroyers. Egypt has now become associated with Mahommedanism in a secondary way. But in the days of the hermits there were none of those mosques which guides delight to show one now as part of the interest of Egypt — the alabaster mosque, the mosque of Sultan Hassan, all built with stolen stones. But Christianity and the worship of Isis were side by side,

the Egyptian religion of death side by side with the Christian religion of death to the world. No wonder that the early Christians embalmed their dead, and that they painted the faces on wood as the Egyptians had painted the faces of the dead on the cases of the mummies, or that regarding hieroglyphics they began to paint Christian hieroglyphics—the frescoes peculiar to the Eastern Church. Paphnutius flinging a stone at the Sphinx learned his mistake when he saw a look of sadness come over the face, and the lips seemed to murmur to him the name of Christ.

The influence of Egypt went northward. As the gospel is read facing the north, and the belfries of Eastern Churches calling the people to worship are put northward of the holy building, so the whole Church looked northward. Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern World. The embalmed bodies of the saints who had died in the desert were taken thither, the faces of the dead were painted into the fresco and the ikon. Hermits appeared in all the desolate mountains and rocks of Greece and Bulgaria and Asia Minor. Christianity crossed the Black Sea, and hermits appeared in the Caucasus, and stately cathedrals were built on the shores of the sea. Christianity sailed up the Russian rivers and hid in the Russian forests. Only in the year 988 was Russia officially converted to Christianity, but long before that the Christian hermits and missionaries had appeared.

St. Andrew himself is said to have been the first to come to Russia. The religion that came in was the religion of the hermit, and the faces on the ikons were the faces of anchorites who had died in Egypt or Asia Minor. Christianity took various aspects, but its vital source was the spiritual life of the hermit in the wilderness.

Anon, Egypt was overrun by the Turks. The jewels were plucked from the screens and ikon-frames, the monasteries and churches were pulled down, the monks and hermits put to the sword, and practically the whole material evidence of the existence of Christianity was swept away, as if a storm of the dead sand itself had come over it. One year the desert was a-tinkle with Christian bells, choric with Christian psalms; the next year all was desolation, and when an ancient hermit missed by the Arabs came to Nitria he found not one human being there, and he lived amongst the ruins of monasteries and chapels as if the place were the remotest and most solitary in which a world-forsaker could dwell. In its turn, also, Constantinople fell, and the Hellespont and Bosphorus, the issue to Russia, became Mahommedan. Eastern Christianity receded to Greece, was shut away in Russia. And Greece and Russia, and especially Russia have preserved the direct traditions of the early Church and what Christianity originally meant. With them has remained the spiritual fervour of the hermits.

III

IN THE DESERT

BETWEEN the Nile and the Red Sea lay the desert of the Thebaid, and the remote monastery of St. Anthony is now reached after two days' camel ride from the station Beni Suef. The desert of Scete where Arsenius lived — the desert where Philammon the hero of "Hypatia" learned to be a monk — is on the Upper Nile. What was Nitria is now Wadi el Natrun, and is reached by three days' camel ride from the Pyramids, or *via* Khatadba, one of the stations on a loop of the Cairo-Alexandria railway. The shrines of the hermits are in the hands of the Copts, a simple Christian people, said to be the lineal descendants of the ancient Egyptians. The Coptic Church is an Eastern one, and it is the lineal descendant of the Church of Egypt that flourished in the first centuries of Christianity. Only whereas the church of Egypt was a brightly living church, the Coptic Church is going on in a tradition. What is valuable in the Coptic Church to-day is that it has slept through many centuries, unchanging, that it has never been rich and pompous, never erudite, never pleasure-loving. It has

withstood the Arabs through dwelling in the wilderness and fortifying its churches and monastery walls and being hard. It has never had the opportunity to thrive. So it has preserved the traditions and something of the spirit of early Christianity, and in the half-ruined temples of the desert you may see the stigmata of Christ.

I had some difficulty finding out about the monasteries: no one goes to Egypt to visit Christian shrines, so my desire to know where the ancient hermits had lived sounded strange and unwonted in the ears of most people. But at length, through the Bishop of Jerusalem and Marcus Bey Simaika, the leader of the Coptic community in Cairo, I got a letter from the Patriarch and full directions as to how to reach the desert shrines. I chose to go to Nitria.

Out of sight of the grey triangles of the Pyramids, out of sight of everything, and over the even, empty desert, white, yellow, burning, rose-lined on the horizon, glaring . . . heat and light beat upward from the sand on which and into which the terrible and splendid sun drives its armies all day. The air is so dry and light that one seems to have lost weight. There is a feeling of unusual exhilaration.

I came on horseback to an oasis, not a bountiful and delectable oasis with shade of palm trees, fruit

to pluck above the head, and cold water bubbling from a spring below, but a poisonous marsh overgrown with reeds full of reptiles and blood-sucking flies. There are good and evil oases. This was the marsh that gave its name to Nitria — the soda marsh. The hermits chose it because it was even worse than the desert. My black horse prances along on somewhat doubtful turf, and then once more to the loose and heavy sand blown into waves and undulating like the sea. On the horizon lies the strange blunt silhouette of the first of the monasteries, and without a trace to follow we plunge through the sand towards it. We come up to it at last, an enigmatical-looking building which has the shapelessness and silence of a ruin. How silent it is! What a deathly and unearthly silence! It seems hardly possible that human beings are living there. The cream-coloured walls are lined, patched, broken, gigantic. It is a rectangular fortress. There is but one entrance, and that is a small one and heavily barred. There are no steps in the sand; if yesterday had any footfalls the wind has smoothed them away, and the breathless silence is one which it seems almost possible to hold in one's hand.

From the high yellow battlement an old loose rope hangs down, and is evidently connected with a bell.

Jingle-jangle-jangle! I ring the bell and wait expectantly. There is a long silence and I ring

again, jingle-jangle, jangle-jangle-jangle! Then some one comes and laboriously undoes the little door, and a dishevelled, bare-footed monk appears. I present the letter which I bear from the Patriarch, and am admitted. The monks are pleased; all shake hands. I sit on one divan, and five of them on another. One novice washes my hands, another brings me a glass of a brown-coloured drink — it is medlar juice and water, and is full of the fibre of the fruit. This finished, he brings me a glass of pink sugar water, then coffee all round, thimblefuls of sweet coffee. The abbot, a fine-looking fellow with regular features, broad face, black moustache and beard, and with an open space showing the freshness of the lower lip, is talkative. He has a towel wrapped round his brows for turban, and fingers black beads as he talks. Next to him is a comfortable-looking monk in a blue smock and white knitted skull-cap on his head. Next to him, an old fellow with wizened bare legs and feet, old yellow rags on his grizzled head, ragged black cassock over his grey underclothes.

"What do you do all day?" I asked.

"Pray, read, sing," they answered.

"What do you think of the war?"

"The war does not touch us. If they come and kill us, we don't mind, but we pray each day that God will bring it soon to a close."

"If the Arabs come, what will you do?"

"If they shoot at us we will throw bread to them, that will be our reply."

"Do you have many visitors?"

"Not many."

"Do the Russian pilgrims come here to pray?"

"Yes, some."

"Are you content to live out here in the Sahara whilst all sorts of great events are happening in the world, and content to have no news and never mix with the people of the city? In England we're too busy, one couldn't escape to a place like this even if one wanted to."

The abbot gave me a remarkable reply:

"I think there is room for everybody: one seeks money, that in his way; another prays, that is his way; another does his duty and ploughs, that is his way. There are many ways. You know of Martha and Mary. Martha was right, but Mary's good part was right also."

How touching it was for me to get this true reply in this remote monastery, and to hear of Martha and Mary in the first half-hour of conversation with the monks. My mind was preoccupied with the ideas of Martha and Mary, and here was this simple Coptic abbot using almost the same terms to express himself as I might use myself.

There were in this monastery about sixteen monks, and in the desert altogether there may be about one

hundred and fifty. Once there were thousands of holy men and hundreds of monasteries. There was gold in the monasteries, there were jewels and pictures. Not an inch of the little desert temples but was covered with Byzantine fresco.

But the Saracen came and murdered the cultured clergy, and tore away the jewels, as was fit, and rolled down many a wall, wrecked many an altar. There was a sixty years' gap in the Christian history of the desert. Then a wilder type of Christian took possession, Arabs who had been converted, or enslaved Copts who had forgotten their own language and learned that of their masters. They brought Arabic gospels and liturgies. They repaired some of the ruins of the old monasteries and churches, and they put up Arabic inscriptions and painted out the old Coptic frescoes and hieroglyphics with frescoes of their own conception. They built round their temples impregnable fortress walls with drawbridges at a height of forty feet above the level of the desert. They withstood sieges and persisted . . . to this day.

The Abbot showed me round the monastery. The buildings were all a patchwork of ruins and repairs and changes. The frescoes had been whitewashed out in nearly every part. The old stained glass, broken and shapeless, was mortared in with new glass. And yet there was a real odour of antiquity in the place.

The patterns in the ikons were but dust patterns, and the face of the Virgin crumbled away as the abbot took the picture down to show me. In a niche here and there left by accident were the original frescoes in wonderful purple and crimson, pictures of the choric saints, their faces and bodies all of that unearthly and mystical shape and colour by which the early Christians loved to represent citizenship of heaven and denial of the world.

The lectern had a nail on which to fix the candle. The communion cup was swathed in the oldest vestments of the monastery. In an ordinary cupboard with easy-swinging wooden door I was shown the mummies of the sixteen Patriarchs of the Coptic Church. Sixteen Patriarchs in a cupboard, each wrapped in his robes and tied up compactly! The Abbot unwrapped one a little and showed me the dried brown flesh. The seventeenth Patriarch, he from whom I had my letter, will find a place in this cupboard in his turn.

In one of the churches I was shown the box with the sacred remains of Macarius, the primitive hermit in whose name the monastery had been founded.

They showed me the books from which the service is read, all hand-copied volumes. I wondered especially at a copy of the New Testament, written ages ago in Coptic and now spattered on every page and every paragraph with new and ancient spots of candle grease.

From the vault of one of the churches hang seven old dusty ostrich eggs by long strings. A monk explained to me that as the ostrich looks to its egg as the most precious thing in life, so they look to God in their prayers — at least, the egg is to remind them.

We went into the fortress church, the only entrance to which is at a height of forty feet by a bridge from the outer rampart. They showed me how the bridge could be drawn in and the monks be secure from assault of arms. Up on the ramparts a novice had his duty beside a pile of bread and a stoup of water. When Bedouin beggars ring the monastery bell, he lowers them bread and water in a basket. "We give away twice as much as we eat ourselves," said the Abbot, showing me the bakery. Here were hundreds of wheaten loaves in long stone receptacles, good bread, but made dirty so that the monks should not get to prize it. They showed me illuminated books a thousand years old, showed me the scrivener's cell where among many quills a monk still copies the Scriptures day by day. They showed me one chapel the whole floor of which was covered with chillies drying, showed me the long room where every evening all the monks gather about the Abbot to read the gospel and discuss its meanings, showed me the massive doors two feet thick of wood and iron, meant to resist the Arab. In one room was a small cask, and the

Abbot took a tin mug and drew me a little wine — communion wine. I drank half; he finished.

The monks were most kind, simple and loving. It was an amusing spectacle at lunch. I lunched; every one else waited on me. A beautiful Abyssinian boy washed my hands, two monks shelled eggs all the time and filled my plate, two others stripped cucumbers for me, another kept helping me to hot milk soup in which slabs of sugar were dissolving. The Abbot stood above me with a feather-brush waving the flies off me. Every one was talking. There was especial interest in the questions which the Abyssinian boy who had washed my hands was continually trying to put. He was a beautiful stripling who could have been posed for Christ Himself, but for the fact that he was black. He was tall and gentle, with large liquid eyes. He was not a monk, but a pilgrim stranded in the desert. He had been on his way to Jerusalem, and had been turned back from Port Said because of the War. He was anxious to hear from me whether I knew of any way of getting to Jerusalem now. The Abbot was the only one who knew Abyssinian, and he interpreted. Alas! I could give him no hope of getting through to the Holy Sepulchre.

I lunched, and slept a little, and the brethren of the monastery slept. Then my horse was brought out to me and I rode away across the sand. Before

going I went to the western side of the monastery and looked out over the Desert. Thousands of miles it went on, level, empty, burning, and yet mysterious. Some Coptic hermits have wandered forth into its mystery and are living the antique life of the anchorite out there. At least, so the Abbot told me, though he couldn't say where they are or how they live. Only now and again, at rare intervals, some one of them comes back to the monastery to communion and then disappears once more.

. . . . . .

I rode away to Bir Hooker, where I stayed the night. That is on the other side of the salt marshes. There an enterprising British company is producing thousands of tons of caustic soda annually. The antique hermits chose this spot in the Desert because of the death-dealing odours which intensified their denial of the world, but in another era, behold British business men doing in the way of trade and worldly gain or duty what these others do in the name of denial of the world. As the Abbot said: There are various ways of serving God, the way of Martha and the way of Mary.

Still, the manager of the caustic soda works, a shrewd and circumspect Scotchman of Protestant temperament, would like to have the sixteen Patriarchs buried decently and, if he could, spend three days in each

of the monasteries tidying up. "It's not showing due respect to the dead," said he. "Nor is it sanitary, nor decent. I've nothing to say against the monks, they are simple and kind and hospitable. But they're just *wasting* their lives. They're doing nothing, making nothing." The manager would show the monks how they ought to keep house. But better still, he would clear them all out. They are very good, very kind, there is nothing against them, but what are they *doing*, he asks. Their lives are pure waste. They don't produce caustic soda.

. . . . . .

I go to my room to sleep, and then at midnight come out again to see the full moon flooding the vast plain of sand with light, and to realize once more the breathless and perfect stillness of the desert.

IV

THE WORLD

FROM the Desert back to the town, to "the world," to the hurly-burly of Cairo and the flesh-pots of Egypt! It is war-time, the summer of 1915, the Turks are being fought on the Peninsula of Gallipoli. The city is full of soldiers, sunburned Australians and New Zealanders who have not yet been in action but are being kept lest the Arabs should come out of the Desert and strive to efface the English and French civilisation of the banks of the lower Nile and so add more ruins to the ruins of Egypt. The city is majestical with its broad streets, white stone palaces and stately mansions, its wondrous river and its mighty bridges. The dryness, cleanness, and whiteness of a city that knows no rain; the city gleams in a vast supply of sunshine. The wind blows all the time from the Desert, and wafts heat in the face as from a furnace. A city of life and gay energy. The fountain of life plays rapidly and brilliantly all the time, throwing up all colours, forms, faces. There is a sense of resplendent and tremendous gaiety. No one comes to Cairo to be an ascetic and mortify the

flesh. But every building, every sight and sound, says, "Life, life, life." All around is death — the Desert which is death itself, the Pyramids which are tombs, the old cities and ruins which are the bodies of ancient civilisations passed away. But every sight and sound in the oasis of the great city says — Live, be gay, let the pulse beat fast, let the heart go and be glad, let the eyes sparkle and burn, let the lips form words of passion and pleasure.

There is a sense of an immense antiquity which in contrast with the little second of the present moment makes the latter less important, less holy. There is a subtle smell in the air, an odour that makes the head a little dizzy and the hands a little feverish as you walk; it is the actual odour of antiquity, a finest dust in suspension in the wind, the dust of decay from past ages. All that dies in Egypt becomes dry, and only after centuries turns to dust and loses form. That which rots away in a year in our Northern clime keeps its semblance for a thousand years in Egypt. The stones of the houses of native Cairo were many of them quarried by the ancients; the wooden beams and joists have lasted from the days of the Pharaohs, and only now are gently crumbling. Here the very stones can be used to manure the fields. Subtly, secretly, the seventh foundation is always crumbling away and passing in dust into the Desert air. The smell in the air is

partly the fine dust of mummies, of the bodies that were once erect and nervous and vivid, gay and felicitous and moving, the mysterious flocking humans of thousands of years ago.

The streets roll forward with flocking crowds — dark faces, brown faces, sallow faces; red caps and straw hats and little turbans and smocks and burnous; Negroes, Copts, Arabs, women in white veils, women with dark veils; Europeans, soldiers, hawkers, mendicants, post-card sellers, newspaper vendors. Along the centre of the broad sun-swept roadways crash the electric trams; the rubber-tyred cabs and wide-hooded victorias follow pleasantly; the motor cars proceed; the military auto-cycles pant; and the heavy ox and buffalo carts of the natives blunder along at the sides. There is doing everywhere, happening, being. Voluminous and promiscuous action floods and surges through the city with the traffic. It is life everywhere. And yet mingled with life there is death. There is plague in Cairo, and every now and then the eyes rest on a native funeral procession, one procession, two processions, five processions, ten processions, all following one another. They are in every street, and they go past with their strange pomp of death, with the body and the mourners and the keeners and professional howlers. The brightly living crowd on the footways each side of the road pause a

moment and think, "Some one has died," and pass on, oblivious, intent on life.

In luxurious hotels gentle and beautiful Nubians are handing out delicate fare, rich dishes cooked and served in that sought-out and magnificent style that Egypt has inherited from ages of epicurism. And a wonderful assembly of officers and ladies, rich pleasure-seekers and tourists from the Mediterranean shores, invalids, receives — sitting at flower-decked tables in great halls. Many restless souls fall into the rhythm of Egypt and feel themselves part of a great and satisfying grandeur. It is borne in upon the mind that the rich have always lived in a certain way in Egypt, and that the grandeur of Pharaoh and of Antony and Cleopatra are one and the same with the grandeur of to-day. A living thread of crimson and gold runs through the centuries of Egypt and is caught to-day, unbroken. Cairo is the capital of the Desert, and yet I do not know. It seems to me even at midday, when the sun glares over the stones, that somehow the Desert does not exist, or that it is in profound darkness, and that Cairo is a city all lamps, an island of effulgent light encompassed on all sides with darkness. It is barely credible that the sun of Cairo is the terrible sun of the Sahara, the sun whose monstrous arms clasp thousands of miles of scorched sand and wasted world, that the sun may not even notice Cairo

as it looks on the Desert. But those who live in the cities of Egypt are enough unto themselves.

A strange impression, in the afternoon, to go down side streets and see the throngs of young men, unsteady on their feet but bright-eyed and thirsty-lipped, greedy, eager; the strong-limbed sunburnt Colonial soldiers dancing with Arab girls, the café-chantants, shooting saloons, bars, bad houses, the barrel organs, the smell of the air.

One can spare a questioning thought as to the homes of the soldiers. They come to Egypt from a fresh Colonial country, from good homes, pure women who are their mothers, gentle and innocent girls who are their brides. They nobly offer themselves to fight for their race against a false idea and a predatory nation. Tears fall at their departure, Prayers accompany them. But though bound for France and England they suddenly find their destination changed to Turkey, and they are put down, for convenience, in Egypt. They are dumped upon this mysterious and astonishing country as if one bit of dry land were just the same as any other, and without any notion of the spiritual significance of being stranded here. No blame to any one. Providence directs the destinies of men and women.

The first army that came were the wildest, boldest, and they plunged right away into the sin and gaiety and dangerous pleasures of the city, conducted by the

money-grubbing but ingenious and smiling Arabs to the gambling dens, dancing-houses, and strange parlours of the back streets. They were cheated, swindled, robbed whilst drunk, robbed whilst asleep, but they saw strange sights and tasted unusual pleasures, sating the new eyes and lips which Egypt had given them. At last, the time drawing nigh for their departure for the Dardanelles, they resolved to get back part of what they had lost in the back streets of the city — certain things they could never get back — and they went down in force and sacked the houses and rushed the Arabs and Arab women to the streets and took back what they could find. There was a great riot. The native police were called out, and they fired at the screaming mob. Such scenes were enacted in the city that brought to mind the continuous street-rioting in Alexandria in the old early-Christian days. But what is most significant in the sight of these fine young men in the city is the realisation of the impure strain they take back with them from Egypt to the women and the children of Australia and New Zealand.

Night comes over the stately city, and the Europeans in their white clothes come in greater numbers into the streets. The great remote staring moon stands over the broad highway and arched bridges. Heat seems to be generated through the

haze in the sky, but a light dry breeze is ever blowing, and the pungent sweetish odour of the city is in the nostrils. In the contrast of darkness and night silence the clangour of Eastern music is more stirring. It stirs the body, not the soul, and is like the sensuous music of Nebuchadnezzar, the music of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer. Dark women with gold ornaments hang out from curtainless windows or lurk just inside doorways and dark passages, ready to coil snakelike upon a prey. In the roadways a shouting, calling crowd. In the taverns they are singing "Tipperary" and "We won't go home till morning"; some men are standing on the tables, others are trying to put gawky Arab girls through the steps of a tango. The music jangles. The whole street has a collective voice, a strange tinkling and murmuring uproar.

A tall, lank, loose-jawed, genial Copt would show you the haunts of evil, and offers his services to procure you pleasure. You have said "No" to him; he stands there where you left him on the pavement in his long cotton rags, smiling gently and cogitatively — the same type as stood in the city of the Pharaohs in the old days of the Israelitish bondage. It is strange to reflect that they find in the mummies of those who lived so many thousands of years ago the marks of "the city's disease," and the sign of the impure strain. There is a community of sin. What was in ancient Egypt is in the world to-day and was not invented in any recent

time but has been carried on from one human being to another, to many others, and from them to others still.

I look at the mummies of Egypt, at the bright pictures of the people, fresh as if painted yesterday. These paintings on the coffin-lids live, they are the real people. You know that the brown dry bodies wrapped in thick folds of linen did once walk, and were the beautiful society of some era five or six thousand years ago. There is in Cairo the unwrapped mummy of the majestical Pharaoh who would not let the children of Israel go. As you look at his face time is bridged over, and you see how brief a space is our vaunted history of man and what parochial dwellers in time we are, rolling our eyes and hushing our accents when we speak of a hundred or a thousand years, as if those seconds of being were of vast extent, tiring the angels to get over them. There lies old Pharaoh, brown, but still in the flesh. He has a Roman nose, distinguished features, the face of a man of learning; there is a look of Dante about him. His neck has shrunk to the size of a bird's neck and his head rather dangles on it, but it is an actual head and an actual face.

Pharaoh is unwrapped, but beside him stands an unopened pupa case; the linen is fresh as when new, and daintily folded and tied as on the day of burial five thousand years ago. A lotus flower lies in the coffin; it looks as if it had been picked last month and had wilted a little, and yet it may have been picked by the

princess herself, and she was a daughter of one of the Pharaohs — perchance even of her who found and cherished the baby Moses.

When you read of Jacob in the Old Testament, that —

> . . . the physicians embalmed him. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days. And when the days of his mourning were past . . . Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him all the servants of Pharaoh and the elders of his house and the elders of the land of Egypt . . .

you realise that there is perhaps somewhere a mummy of Jacob, and a modern might see him face to face.

Time flies. But the distance is near. I would like to imagine one night in ancient Egypt. The faces on the coffins as I look at them, lid after lid, are quite realisable, those broad cheeks and bright eyes. . . . I suppose one could find five thousand mummies who in their lifetime were contemporaries, and one night they are all thinking about much the same thing. Something is toward at the Court; their chairs or carriages or chariots come for them; they are decked out, they have their jewels in their hair, their fine garb, their vanities, spites, triumphs, vexations, loves, amibitions. They dwell in their present moment, eyes burn, hearts beat faster, lips frame vain words. The same moon is on high, the same odour in the air. They bend their gaze towards the throne,

they flock towards the throne as if the touch of it were miraculous. Vanity of vanities! The Israelites had to go out to the Desert to find the ten commandments and the Mosaic laws. Vanity of vanities — and is it not *all* vanity? Is not the life of the ascetics in the Desert vanity also? No, for they have denied the world. They have said *No* to Egypt and gone into the wilderness to seek a promised land. In their shrunken pearly faces is written a different allegiance from that of Pharaoh. They deny that this world is our world, that our life is our true life, that death is really death.

But we do not condemn the gay crowd that imagination has summoned from the linen wrappings of the tombs, nor the glimmering of khaki and burnous in the purlieus of Cairo in that moment we call 1915. Mankind is one and indivisible.

. . .

Outside the city stand the three triangles and the woman's head, signs written in the sand which might cause all people to know that there was some mystery about Cairo.

The dead are sleeping and you cannot wake them. There are crowns on their heads, and they sleep that fixed, unearthly, steady sleep, undisturbed, untouched, uncorrupted. Egypt that was is dreaming Egypt that is. Out in the desert sits the Sphinx with an I-am-that-I-am expression on its face.

V

ST. SOPHIA

. . . new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven . . . as a bride adorned for her husband.

KINGSLEY remarks that though Cyril thought he was establishing the kingdom of God upon earth, he was in reality establishing a sort of devil's kingdom. The kingdom of God was independent of Cyril. And yet, of course, a great deal of the material success of Christianity was due to Cyril — if Christianity can really have such a thing as material success. Cyril was a sort of Cæsar to whom must be rendered the things that are Cæsar's. And in his day imperial Cæsar himself had become Christian, and kings were to arise who would claim as a divine right, not only the things that are Cæsar's but also the things that are God's.

They were in their day accounted great, and there was noise about them and lights, and throngs of those who flock to noise and light. But though some were mighty instruments of the Divine Will, the spiritual power did not proceed from them but from the silences

and the obscurities and privacies of life. But for the holy men in the desert Cyril could no more have gloried and lasted than could a blossom without root. And on the other hand, Cyril and his like, and what they stood for, were in one sense the blossom and fruit of the seed sown by the hermits. It was the hermits who gave the spiritual impulse to Alexandria. Alexandria in turn gave new hermits to the desert — as new seeds fall from flowers in autumn. Such is the unity of the Church.

It seems at first as if the rude cave or cell of the hermit cannot be reconciled with the splendour of the churches of their time, with, for instance, the wondrous cathedral of St. Sophia, as if the wretched cave or hole in the earth were a contradiction of the great marble temple, painted and gilded and set with all manner of gold ornament and precious stone — and yet there is this obvious reconciliation, that the one is the seed, the other the blossom; the one the prayer in secret, the other the reward made openly; one the white light, the other the rainbow of Creation.

The first centuries of Christianity were a wild time. Many religions and philosophies were in the throes of glorious death, exchanging their mortality for Christian immortality. The music of change streams upward in wild, rapturous, sensuous, and agonising melody. Ten thousand passions and tragedies of conflicting import ravish the senses, and

the heart leaps and the blood dances in the veins at the spectacle of death becoming life, or the heart sinks and the face pales at the dread of life turning to death. Only the calm soul sees the myriad colours blend at last and become reconciled in the whiteness of Christ.

And that whiteness into which the other creeds must merge is the Holy Wisdom, the Sancta Sophia, with the name of which the early Eastern Church identified itself, representing the Bride of Christ as a new Athene, Sophia, the Christian Wisdom.

The Holy Wisdom, distilled from Isis and Athene and thousands of other goddesses and conceptions that died to become Christian, the water of life distilled from all the magical fluids of antiquity. The wild waste of passion and colour, the almost barbarous pageantry of the early Church, is the pageantry of autumn; the reds and browns and yellows, the flame-colours and death-colours that go before the whiteness of Christmas.

The cathedral of St. Sophia itself, the beautiful symbol of the Bride of Christ, is the representation of the death of thousands of creeds to become immortal in the new Christian conception. There is not an idea that is being transmuted that does not find its counterpart in the sacred edifice.

A mystic wrote: "St. Sophia was not born or created, but was built." A relic, the dust or bones of those

who had died for the faith, was built between every tenth stone in the walls of the cathedral. The walls were of granite and marble; the pillars of porphyry, malachite, and glimmering alabaster; the floor of polished marble; the doors of cedar inlaid with ivory and amber. Its height was as the height of heaven, its breadth as that of the earth. They brought the glory and honour of the nations into it. Trees of silver with lights for fruit sprang from the floor, like the tree of life in the midst of the City. Silver boats with oil and floating wicks hung from the domes. The stone canopy above the ambo bore a great cross inlaid with diamonds and pearls. Above the screen which shut off the choir were twelve columns overlaid with silver, and between them representations of the Jewish prophets, the Holy Family, and the four Evangelists — the past, the present, and the future of Christianity. The altar was raised upon a throne of gold, and was formed of thousands of precious stones and gems and pearls that had been crushed to dust and diffused in molten gold — as if of the pure lives and passions of all men a wine had been pressed into a precious chalice. On all the walls and on many of the pillars were painted the pageant of the Church, the prophets walking with God, the Saviour revealing God, the saints and martyrs and champions living and dying for the truth. There was not a religious history nor a Christian life that did not find its counterpart or

emblem in the frescoes of St. Sophia. The cathedral and the idea of Sophia functionised every true conception and beautiful life lived in its day. It was "The Word" written in stone, and standing instead of the ruined and almost illegible tablets of Moses. It was the white stone in which the new name was written.

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The idea of St. Sophia is reduplicated throughout the Eastern Church. It is a-gleam in millions of ikons, endeavours to paint the *all* of Christianity and the living breathing Church itself, the Bride. It is the inspiration of such a cathedral as that of St. Basil, that marvellous mediæval passion in stone built by Ivan the Terrible in the Red Square of Moscow — hence its many colours, its extraordinary diversity of shapes, its harmonisation of incongruous angles and solecisms of form, its many chapels and standing places by which the Byzantine architect endeavoured to suggest that each and every one who entered the cathedral might find a particular place where it was most fitting he should stand and praise, a particular chapel where he might kneel in secret. Astonishing to find the architectural idea coming up again in such an unlikely place as New York, in the cathedral of St. John, which will be the largest church in the world, and pre-eminently the cathedral of the West. Into the walls and body of this new cathedral

bits of every kind of stone existent in America are being built. St. John, built from the substance of the world, will be the counterpart of St. Sophia, built of the substance of the other world, and having the dust of martyrs between each tenth stone — the cathedral of the way of Martha and the West, balancing the cathedral of the way of Mary and the East.

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Roman Catholicism was founded on the rock of apostolic succession. St. Peter's represents the House built upon a rock, the House that shall survive all storms and tempests. Eastern Christianity or Orthodoxy was founded on St. Sophia, the Holy Wisdom; and whereas Catholicism is a House built on the earth, Orthodoxy is a House vouchsafed from heaven, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven . . . as a bride adorned for her husband.

The word is one and the same. But the Roman Catholic is the least free of individuals, religiously. The rock of apostolic succession is the rock of infallibility. And whereas a foundation of wisdom implies freedom of individual thought, a foundation of infallibility implies intellectual and religious servitude. A Roman Catholic who thinks for himself in religious matters has already begun to be a heretic and has a sin to confess to his father-confessor.

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The service in one of our London churches frequently ends on the antiphone:

> I am the Living Bread, which came down from heaven.
> Whoso eateth Me shall live for ever.

Even among the least religious people the sitting down together to a meal makes a certain intimacy. The loaf which is broken for you and me and another goes to make flesh and blood in each of us. Without any reflection or thought we know that we are nearer because we have broken bread together. At the symbolical meal, Communion, we are consciously nearer. By virtue of the bread that was broken for us we know ourselves nearer to one another.

Unity is the deepest knowledge. There are moments when one feels one would with deep emotion offer one's ego and individuality upon the altar of unity, when one would cease to be John Brown or Ivan Ivanovitch, and become one with the human race, giving up one's rich treasure of memories and experiences, character, developed intelligence, dear idiosyncrasies. In the depths of that humility is discovered a new graciousness and love, a new faith.

Only at death do we pass completely to the unity, though in life at rare moments we can apprehend it. That unity is not necessarily the unity of the family, of the human race as a family; it may be the human race is after all only one human being — Sophia, the Bride of Christ.

VI

FROM EGYPT TO RUSSIA

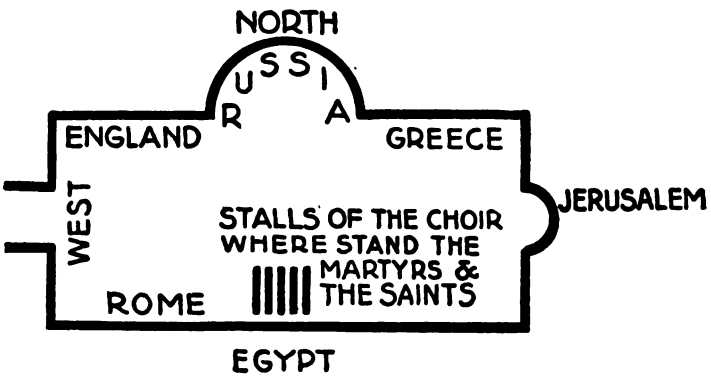
On the quay at Alexandria flocks of Russian peasant pilgrims with great bundles on their backs, men and women who had been in Jerusalem when the Great War broke out, or at Mount Sinai in the desert seeking remote shrines and holy men. As Smerdyakof said, "No one in these days can move mountains into the sea by faith, unless perhaps one man in the world, or at most two, and they most likely saving their souls in secret somewhere in the Egyptian desert"; and the peasant pilgrim, through the traditions of his Church, always looks to these deserts for spiritual power.

Besides the Christian pilgrims are hundreds of refugee Jews driven out of Zion by the belligerent Turk, many of them patriarchal types of great piety, long-bearded men with multiplex wrinkles on their brows.

My ship goes riding over the sea to Greece, passing the seven churches, those candles lit in the dim dawn of Christianity, passing Cyprus and Patmos and a thousand nameless islands where lived mystics, hermits, and writers of the early Church. We carried ikons

brought from Jerusalem to be carried back to Russia. The pilgrims sang Christian hymns; the Jewish patriarchs, with phylacteries on their brows, read the Mosaic books and the prophets. Nearly every one on the boat was bound for Russia. We went thither the way these things have ever gone, from the desert northward over the sea. Not in vain does the reader of the Gospel stand facing the north; not in vain is the belfry of the cathedral built on the northern side. The direct message of Christianity has been the message that has gone northward.

The cathedral of Christianity, our St. Sophia in large, may perhaps be imagined in this guise.



Egypt is the choir of the cathedral where stand the martyrs and the saints singing in white robes. Through the gates at the north and the west come those who hear the sweet tidings and the heavenly music.

The journey from Egypt to Russia is like going across our great Sophia from the splendid choir to the multitudes who have come out of the forests to listen.

Christianity went over the waves to Athos and Tsargrad, to the Greek and Roman cities of the Black Sea shores, and up the mighty rivers to Kief and Novgorod and Yaroslaf, down the great Volga, driving the Tartar before it, across the forests and along the rivers where lived the primeval nature-worshippers of Russia, brought by knights in armour, by priests and bishops, engendered by hermits and martyrs, enforced eventually by princes and monarchs, interwoven with the splendour of mediæval chivalry. Russia became officially Christian in 988, when King Vladimir and his hosts were baptized in the Dnieper at Kief. A cathedral of St. Sophia, "mother of Russian churches," springs up at Kief, St. Sophia appears at Novgorod, St. Sophia at Yaroslaf. At the time of our Edward the Confessor Russia was as fervently Christian as England. And the seed, no doubt, had sunk deeper or had been wafted into remoter solitudes. There was room in Russia for Christianity to mature in the popular mind.

At last the Turks streamed across the Levant, and severed the Christian world in two. Foolish and naïve Mahomet came stamping into the great cathedral of Sophia on horseback, shouting out at

the foot of the sublime altar, "There is no god but God, and Mahomet is His prophet." Legend says that on that day a priest was celebrating Mass at the altar, and he prayed that the body of Christ might be saved from profanation. As an answer to his prayer the stones gaped, and priest and Host were enclosed, as the relics had been that in earlier days were placed between the tenth stones. The priest was probably murdered as he broke the bread, and, it is true, he has been taken into the wall and has become part of the Bride.

Leopards have their dens where Christian hermits once prayed to God, and they do not know that the ground is holy ground. And the ferocious yet simple Turk has it not in his power to profane Sancta Sophia. When the time comes he can be driven back to the wilds whence he came.

Constantinople falls. But Christianity does not fall, rather it grows. Russian Christianity is saved from much ecclesiastical exploitation, Levantine corruption, and materialism by the severance of the earthly tie, the break-up of the patriarchate of Tsargrad. After the Turks took Constantinople Russian Christianity was fed by the angels. Hence its fair face to-day.

Over the sea to Russia, to the Kremlins round the many-domed churches, to the gleaming ikons, to the great choruses, resplendent and triumphant

Orthodoxy; to the land where every day and night there is witness, where the young men see visions and the old men dream dreams; to Kief, to Novgorod, to Moscow, to the Kremlin, to the great pink-walled hill that stands above the mother-city crowned with churches. Bowing at the Ilinskaya, baring the head to enter at the Spassky Gate . . . my eyes rest on the wan wall of St. John the Great. I climb to the belfry and let my fingers pass lovingly over the bulging bells. I light a candle in the cathedral of the Assumption. I walk across the broad open spaces where Napoleon's cannon are ranged and listen to the sad slow chime of the Kremlin clock giving the hours and the quarters. Here again is a holy city standing above a merely worldly city, this walled hill over commercial Moscow, this Sophia exalted above Prudentia.

In the first autumn of the War, when I was at Moscow, I used to go to the Kremlin last thing each night. They were beautifully starry and peaceful nights. The churches and the low pavements that wander among the cobbles were flooded with silver, the toothed battlements and antediluvian old towers of the Kremlin walls seemed gigantically exaggerated in silhouette, and yet, though exaggerated, in a way truer, as if the ordinary vision of them we had by day was not correct, as if they were really in themselves of enormous importance and correspondingly enormous proportions. The moat of the Moscow river lay

murky below, and afar among the vast congregation of the houses of the city a lamp burned here and there as if before votive shrines. Motionless sentries stood in front of the cathedrals. One's own steps echoed startlingly. The single liquid melody of the Kremlin chime broke out and poured away — *ding, ding, ding, ding, dong, dell, dell.* Holy Russia was watching.

I went into a cathedral: still many candles were burning. I walked along the walls: lamps were alight before holy pictures set in the old bricks. There was a perfect stillness and serenity. I paused, and the mind went across Moscow and beyond it fifteen hundred miles to Poland and Germany and Austria where was another scene, a more exterior scene and manifestation of the life of Russia, — Russia in arms against a false ideal. Russia was serene though Russia was in deadly struggle. The heart was beating faithfully, strong hands were smiting the foe.

In the night the hundreds of Napoleon's black cannon had a sinister aspect, each one seemed pointed at me. The mind went back to their real hour of history when from them death blazed forth; when instead of this stillness and serenity the thunder and tumult of battle was around them. They are death's heads of what once were live guns; they are greedy as death, menacing as death — harmless also as death. Away above them among the glittering stars stand the gold crosses of the churches, the splendour of God.

The mind's eye takes in hundreds and thousands of gold crosses, waving, dipping, lifting, triumphant, the grand processional aspect of the Church. Even at this moment how many are dying, how many souls are passing. In the Kremlin in the still night Holy Russia is watching. Away on the battlefields the brave are dying. Look, in the Kremlin you see their crosses among the stars; listen, you hear the heavenly chorus swelling as they join the great procession of the Church.

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From Egypt to Russia, and then from Russia West once more to England. The tempestuous War still rages, and in the seasons of history it is deep winter. Ravenous winds lash the bare trees, howl through the churchyards. Or the wind dies down awhile and bitter frost sets in, and the merciless hungry stars stare at the dead earth. Or heavy clouds come over and the snow sifts down, becomes deeper, communes with the breeze, wreathes itself in fantastic drifts. On the still branches of the forest the snow is balanced, or only disturbed by ravens flitting awkwardly from one tree to another. It is the winter of history, but the season will change. Under the crusted streams the water is flowing, flowers are rising under the snow, flowers from the living seed. The seed lives through the four seasons, and the seed is the Word of God.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

WAR AND CHRISTIANITY

AMONG the Russians, as among other nations, there are many whose conscience does not permit them to bear arms and fight, many who believe that war is evil in itself, and that it is unchristian to oppose force with force. Russia has its non-resisters, Dukhobors, Molokans, Quakers, who either obtain official exemption from military service, or who suffer punishment for refusing to obey the call. And among the mass of the Russian people who as yet *do* obey the summons and shoulder the gun for the Fatherland, the question is frequently raised, "Can we reconcile Christianity and war? Can we reconcile the spirit of Russian religion with the using of brute force to overcome a wrong or to defeat an enemy?

Not that any great number of the Russian peasant soldiers ask themselves questions about the ethics of war. They go forward gladly to fight for the Tsar, and to defend their country. With them fighting is a tradition — Christianity is Christian warfare, not warfare with sin and disease and crime, but war against the heathen. Since the pagan god Peroun was rolled down the cliffs, and the army of Vladimir stepped into the Dnieper and was baptized as one man, Russian Christianity has been a Christianity in arms, in arms against Tartar and Mongol and Turk.

The spirit that prompted the Crusades perseveres. That is why a war against the Turk is a great national war; it is still something in the nature of a great religious pageant. More than half the man saints on the Russian Calendar are warriors, and the rest are simply monks and hermits.

Still as wars go on they change in type. Fighting has ceased to be a praising of God. There is no raining of splendid blows on the Saracen's head. War for the common soldier has ceased to be fighting, and has become "obeying orders." The soldier does not even know whither his shot has sped. He seldom or never shoots at a man; he shoots at a vague general man called the enemy. He also knows that no one is trying to kill him personally, and that he in his turn is also part of a vague impersonal man — the enemy of the man on the other side.

War becomes a standing to be killed for one's country, and an obeying of orders.

It is a noble and a Christian thing to die for one's native land. It is also one's duty to obey the orders of those put in authority over us. The question is, Are those who direct the war acting in a Christian spirit? They in their turn obey orders of those in authority over them — the Generals, the Commander-in-Chief, the Government, the Tsar. They must render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.

Is it then Christianity in the Tsar to make war, or to answer force by force? Some Russians say, "It depends on the cause. A war to protect little Servia is a good and Christian war." Others say, "It does not depend on the cause. No cause, not even the best in the world, can justify the carrying on of war; of that wholesale and or-

ganised murder which goes by the name of war." So we come to the Russian Pacifists, and those who believe that any peace is better than the justest war. They declare that war is evil in itself. They offer no compromise on the subject. In time of peace the Pacifists have a great following, and they seem to be in a majority; but when war breaks out a great number who merely sympathise, but do not absolutely believe, fall away and leave the true Pacifists standing, as they have stood in each war up till now, in a hopeless minority.

They hold that war is a survival of barbarism, or, to put it in the words of Solovyof, "Something like cannibalism, a barbarous custom that must in time be isolated and localised among the more savage regions of the world, and then slowly but steadily disappear till it becomes merely a historical curiosity."

The simplest way to test this notion of war would have been to survey the modern history of the civilised world and see if war between civilised community tended on the whole to be less. But here and now as I write is the vast conflagration of the German war. If this war had not come about it might have been possible to say, "Man is on the whole tending towards universal peace." The Spanish-American War was scarcely a war at all. The South African War was an example of the power which could be brought to bear on an uncultured and wild people to make them behave themselves and be peaceful. The Russo-Japanese War was begun in the misconception that the Japanese were yellow devils, and if the Russians had known with whom they had to deal they could have arranged matters.

The Italian-Turkish War was simply a cultured nation taking over territory of the wild and warlike Turks, and so precluding war for the future. The wars in the Balkan States were the natural conflicts of wild tribes not yet properly civilised. Up to that point war could be explained away, but then we come to July 1914 with its European conflagration, and the Pacifist inference cannot be made.

For the time being war is redeemed from the imputation of savagery by the great German conflict. It can no longer be classified as a disgusting practice such as cannibalism or sutteeism.

But the minority, those who still take peace as a golden rule, are even now unconvinced. At the best they hold that this war is a war to prevent war in the future, a war for the establishment of the Federation of Europe, a war that will make possible universal peace.

Still they hold that notion as a makeshift opinion. They would never in the palmy days of peace have thought it possible that mankind would go to war in order to get a better peace afterwards. They held that war was always avoidable, and that you could not by Satan cast out Satan.

They hold that nationally as individually we should give back good for evil. Amongst the educated Russians there are many Pacifists, many non-resisters, a number also of Quaker-like people who refer all war arguments to the one simple commandment — "Thou shalt not kill!"

Many Russians hold that Christ substituted for the Jewish law, "Thou shalt not kill!" the moral principle "Thou shalt not hate!" And they understand the chastisement of war as performed more in sorrow than in anger.

Those who try to follow out literally the patterns of behaviour set out in the Gospel ask what would the Good Samaritan have done if he had come earlier than he did and had met the man who fell among thieves just at the moment when the thieves were attacking him with apparently murderous intent. Would he then have had to pass by on the other side like the Levite, or should he have fallen on his knees and prayed, or should he have rushed to the physical assistance of the man who was being attacked. Many held that it would have been the Samaritan's duty to defend his neighbour with all the means in his power. As the General says in Solovyof's conversation, "I prayed best when giving commands to the horse-artillery." So in August 1914, when Austria fell upon Servia and Germany fell upon Belgium, Russia in the East and Britain in the West rushed generously to give their physical assistance to the nations in distress. America, like the Levite, averted his eyes and said, "It is no concern of mine."

The action of Britain and Russia is no doubt popular Christianity. It is the way of the world. Christianity was not preached to nations but to individuals.

The true Christian attitude of the man who falls among thieves is to give up his money and strip off his clothes and hand them to the thieves saying, "Would to God there were more for thee!" He would offer no show of defence, but, on the contrary, would rejoice. For in taking away money and clothes they took away earthly material things, things that should be lightly prized. To have given them freely and affectionately to those who wanted them was to

blossom spiritually, or, to use another figure, it was to quicken the circulation of love. And directly he gives up these things the Good Samaritan comes along and he, out of pure affection, gives from his superfluity the means to the naked one to be clothed and restored.

If the Good Samaritan had come up in time he would as a Christian have been ready to give his things also to the thieves. Or if the thieves had been actuated by the impulse of murder, he would have fallen on his knees and prayed. Such is the way of those who deny "the world," and with it deny also the power of physical force.

Somewhat of this interpretation of Christian impulse is given in the following Russian conversation taken from the book on War and Christianity written by the great Russian philosopher, Vladimir Solovyof:

Prince. He who is filled with the true spirit of the Gospel will find in himself when necessary the ability by words and gestures, and by his whole spiritual demeanour so to act upon the soul of his unhappy brother who would commit a murder, that the latter will be suddenly overwhelmed and converted, and will see the error of his ways and turn away from the wrong road.

General. Holy Martyrs! Is that the way you'd have me behave towards, for instance, the Bashi-Oozooks, who in Asiatic Turkey massacre the women and children of the Armenian villages. You think I ought to stand before them making touching gestures, saying touching words and making a tender religious appeal to them.

Mr. Z. Your words would not be heard owing to the instance of the murderers, and if heard would not be understood since you know not one another's languages. Then as regards gestures, as you will of course, but I should have thought that under the circumstances the best gesture one could think out for the occasion would be the firing of a few volleys.

Lady. But, seriously, could the General have explained his Christian sentiments to the Bashi-Oozooks?

Prince. I did not at all assume that the Russian army should have acted according to the spirit of the Gospel when dealing with the Bashi-Oozooks. But I do say that a man filled with the true spirit of the Gospel would have found even the possibility then of awakening in dark souls that good which lies hidden in every human being.

Mr. Z. You really think that!

Prince. Not a whit do I doubt.

Mr. Z. Well, do you think that Christ Himself was sufficiently filled with the true spirit of the Gospel?

Prince. Is that a question or a joke?

Mr. Z. I put the question because I'd like to know why Christ did not so apply the true spirit of the Gospel as to awaken the good hidden in the souls of Judas and Herod and of the Jewish chief priests and of the wicked thief of whom we commonly forget when speaking of his repentant brother. . . .

Which confuses the issue because Christianity is not a converting of non-Christians to itself, it is a way of bearing oneself with regard to the world and God, a witnessing of the truth. This life is not truth. For that reason among others Christ does not save Himself from death; material gains on earth are not real gains, so to the man who would take the coat the cloak is given also; the kingdom of this world is not a real kingdom, so Christ turns His back on the Devil when the presidency of the world is offered to Him on the mountain. When St. Peter smote off the ear of the High Priest's servant, Christ restored the ear as a sign that His kingdom could not be won by the sword. When war is brought to the test of Christian idealism, especially as interpreted by the Russians, it is found to be of the

world — a rendering to Cæsar of the things which are Cæsar's.

Nevertheless, if we say that war is unchristian, or if we hold that those waging war are by their very behaviour unchristian, we are wrong. We are mistaking the true spirit of Christianity. For Christianity is no rule which people must obey; it is no set of rules for people. The deepest thing in Christianity is personal choice. Those who are saved are those who personally choose. If a man goes to bear arms for love of his country, if he offers his life as a sacrifice on the altar of his Fatherland, he is still a true Christian though engaged in violence. Or if a man stands out to refuse to go like the peasant in *Peer Gynt*, who cut off one of his fingers so as to be rejected by the army doctor, we still have Christianity exemplified in personal choice and in the readiness to sacrifice material things for spiritual gain.

What, then, of the peasant soldiers who presumably make little choice? Of them it must be said, they are Christians on the emotional plane, not on the intellectual. By their splendid enthusiasm it is evident that the peasants do make an emotional choice. Perhaps in that choice lies their Christianity with regard to war.

They are Christians also in that they do not regard death as something terrible. Death for them is a sacrament, a new baptism, a second time going down of the warriors of King Vladimir to the River Dnieper.

APPENDIX II

THE CHOICE OF EAST AND WEST

An interesting new domain of study is opening for the Bible student in the comparison of what the various nations have taken to themselves in their understanding of the Gospels. Translation itself inevitably changes the emphasis, the *accent* of various passages. And Slavonic perception, British perception, German perception, American perception necessarily differ. It is a truism to say that we each take from a book only what we wish to take from it. To one who knows Russia and has the feeling for Eastern Christianity, there is no more enthralling occupation than to read the Gospels with an eye to discovering which parts Eastern Christianity has emphasised, which parts Western Christianity has taken; which parts, for instance, Russia has emphasised, which parts America has emphasised.

One evening in Vladikavkaz I had a long talk with Russian friends about this difference in emphasis, and we went through the whole of St. Matthew and discussed many texts of the New Testament.

We started with the Beatitudes, as they are the beginning of the Christian teaching. We agreed that "Blessed are the poor in spirit" was a stumbling-block to the West, a phrase that preachers had to interpret very carefully as having a meaning other than "Blessed are the poor-spirited." In

Russia, however, it is perhaps the most important beatitude — at least, two of my Russians held it to be so. In the Russian translation it runs, "Blessed are those who are beggars in spirit." Russia sees blessedness in the state of beggars, in the state of those who have nothing; a beggar in Russia is one who has no earthly possessions. The beggar is a national institution. No one purely Russian in temperament wants to get rid of the beggar — the man who has nothing. Even Gorky calls the beggar the bell of the Lord, the reminder to man that he can have no true possessions here in the world.

The second beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn," we also took to mean more to the East than to the West. The East feels the blessing of mourning, the West the blessing of being comforted.

The third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek," meant more to the West we concluded. We in England and America look forward to what Tennyson calls "the reign of the meek upon earth." We remember the promise that the lion shall lie down with the lamb. One of the most popular of Western pictures is that of the child carrying a palm-branch, "A little child shall lead them." The East, however, feels that the lions will always be lions, that "the world" will remain "the world" without much change, full of the faithless, the cruel, the predatory, mingled with the faithful, the gentle, the self-abnegatory.

The fourth beatitude, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after *righteousness*, for they shall be filled," seemed to me to be also a purely Western one. America and the West have taken it specially to themselves. It has been the

watchword of the Puritans. But my friend Vera astonished me by reading it "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after *truth*, for they shall be filled," and on looking at the Russian translation I found indeed that the word was *pravda* and the popular sense was "truth" rather than righteousness. That difference means a great deal to a national outlook.

"Blessed are the merciful" we took to be a Western beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart" to be Eastern. "Blessed are the peace-makers" has become a very Western idea, and King Edward the Seventh was sung to the grave as a saint as King Edward the Peace-maker. "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" is in Russian "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of truth" — for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake, for great is your reward in heaven" is taken equally by West and East, though the East feels more that the reward is within you, whereas the West thinks of a reward after death.

We considered the Temptations in the Wilderness. First, it was Eastern to go into the wilderness at all. It would have been more Western to go into the town and find salvation in work, in "doing the duty that lay nearest."

The teaching of the temptation to turn stones into bread has an Eastern emphasis. The Russian says, "I would not if I could." The Western is ever coming to the Russian and saying, "Lo, your people are starving; but see how undeveloped your country is, you have gold, you have oil, you

have coal, you have all manner of precious things in your soils and your rocks; say but the word and they can be changed into bread, and your starving may be fed." But the Russian says, "Bread is not so very important; what is important is the word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

The second temptation, that of suicide or of nihilism, of casting one's self down from the Temple, is something the West has understood more clearly. The East continually succumbs to this temptation, and the Russian is ever "tempting God."

The third temptation has a great Eastern emphasis; Jesus, in lofty contemplation of the world and of His own genius, understands that He could be a new Alexander and be king of the whole world. He could reign in wonderful glory, and could enact perfect laws for mankind and issue them with the authority of a king. But He denies the world and its glory in the name of the life of the Spirit. The typical earnest American of to-day, if he saw a chance of ruling all the worlds and felt that he had in him the Divine message, would almost certainly take the opportunity; but the typically serious Russian, or at least the Russian monk, would prostrate himself on the ground, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve'" —"Him only," that is, not mankind.

On the strength of this introduction I have gone through the main teaching of the Gospel, and have made the following differentiation of how East and West have taken or emphasised or avoided the thoughts and words of the New

Testament. We are somewhat tired of the comparison of the Authorised and Revised Versions, or of the English translation with the original Greek texts. Here, I fancy, is something more vital; a comparison of the way the teaching has been generally understood by the masses of the people in the Western and Eastern Churches. I am not comparing the opinions of the authorities in both Churches, but the opinions which hold sway, which make ethics. By this means it may be possible to make what would be a valuable historical record of the position of the progress of Christianity to-day.

The way of the West — what may be called the way of Martha — is easier, more human than the way of the East — the way of Mary. Thus at the Transfiguration the disciple cried out, "Master, it is good for us to be here: let us build three tabernacles." It was not at all necessary to build three tabernacles. The good part was like that of Mary — to sit at Jesus' feet.

But to take the teaching in the order it is given in St. Matthew's Gospel: "Ye are the salt of the earth" has been printed in red ink in the Bibles of the West, and it is generally thought to refer to the just and upright, the elder brothers, the stand-by's of the community as opposed to the prodigals.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven," has in the West become a weekly exhortation to give a good alms at collection-time. This is an instance of materialism. The spendthrift East takes its stand more with St. Peter, who was able to say, "Silver and gold have

I none; but such as I have give I to thee." The giving of money is the least of the good works in the power of the East; "Am I so bankrupt of grace that my function is to give money?" the Eastern may exclaim.

"If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" means more to the East, where in the monastic life of the Orthodox Church the lusts of the flesh are mortified — that is, made dead; where hermits wear heavy chains and take oaths of silence, or hide themselves from mankind. It is witnessed in many sects, such as the Skoptsi, who deny the world by defunctionising the body!

"Swear not at all" is a simple admonition, appealing directly to the Western mind. In Russia the swearing in ordinary conversation is thick as the weeds on a waste. A curiosity in Russian swearing is the common expression *Yay Bogu*, which means really, "Yes: I say it to God," but which through carelessness and iteration has become equivalent to something like our "'s'truth." In America, however, the adjective God-damn is commoner than any other unpleasant expression in any country.

"Resist not evil. Who will take away thy coat, give him thy cloke also; and who forces thee to go a mile, go with him twain; and whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This has been taken more seriously by the Eastern Church. In the West it is more "a counsel of perfection," or the words and the sentiment are taken as an ornament of Christianity. Agnostics and non-Christians make a mock of Christians because they do not turn the other cheek. The teaching is considered of so little importance that it is a Christian act

to give a cad a thrashing, and the clergyman well versed in the noble art of self-defence is by no means a rarity. In Russia, non-resistance is a way of overcoming the world and putting Satan behind you. Going two miles with the man who forces you to go one, giving the cloak to the man who takes the coat, turning the other cheek, are *podvigs*, holy exploits, taking the uniform of Christ's not saving Himself from the Cross.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." This has authority in Russia. In England we do not give for the asking, and to borrow is disgraceful. In Russia giving and lending are scarcely virtues; they are a condition of life. America is also ready to give and lend, but not so much to persons as to societies, funds, hospitals, new priesthoods.

"Love your enemies" is the *podvig*, the holy exploit once more, by which the world is overcome, and is very real in Russia.

"Pray for them which despitefully use you:" this is essentially a teaching that has Western acceptance. The Russian does not pray much for his enemies.

"Be ye perfect!" This is a Western ideal, to be perfect. The East does not strive to be better than it is now.

"Do not your alms before men" is generally disregarded by West and East.

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions:" the West has obeyed this monition. The prayers of the East are indeed not unlike the prayers of the heathen. The Lord's Prayer has meant much more to the West than to the East.

"When ye fast, be not of a sad countenance:" the West, except in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, does not fast. The Roman Catholic Church, though Western in its locality and constitution, is in many of its customs Eastern — for example, in the celibacy of its clergy, in the monastic life it affords, in its fasting, in its repetition of prayers. A wide gap, however, divides it from Eastern Orthodoxy, and as wide a gap separates it from the leading spirit of the West, the latter being decidedly Protestant. Dostoieffsky, in the story of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazof*, treats Roman Catholicism as a great conspiracy to defeat Christianity, and that point of view is taken very seriously by Russians to-day. Roman Catholicism indeed provides a holy way of life, and puts its members in a true position with regard to life and the world, but it does so by authority. Little is allowed to spring from personal initiative, and truths are not so much personal experiences as priestly guarantees. Roman Catholicism stands to one side, and this comparison of the spirit of East and West does not greatly involve her.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." To this the East has paid heed. Russia is the greatest spending nation in the world. No money is saved. Every rouble is spent as it is obtained. In England and America children are actually given money-boxes and taught to save their pennies!

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on:" this is obviously a teaching which conditions the ragged and disorderly and unconventional East. In England

and America one might almost think the opposite ideas had been recommended, seeing how we cherish the right crease in the right sort of attire, how we strive to be in fashion.

But "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" is something which obtains the hearty belief of the West.

"Take no thought for the morrow" has an Eastern accentuation.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" is taken by the West as a cynical utterance. The West believes that Christianity means, "Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof." The West says each day is full of blessing; the East says each day is full of suffering.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged:" no one pays much attention to this.

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye" — a reproof to the West, not needed in the East. America is terribly censorious and critical of the neighbour. Russia has no censure.

"Ask, and it shall be given you" the West has believed. It has, however, asked for material things. The East has taken rather, "Seek, and ye shall find."

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" is in great favour in the West.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate:" this is quite Western in adhesion.

"Beware of false prophets." Both churches have gladly taken this phrase to use against schismatics and dissenters.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." This criterion the West has adopted. Easternism may be said to regard

the barren tree as holy. At least, it never curses the barren.

The story of the wise man who built his house upon a rock has edified the West.

To the story of the scribe who wished to follow Jesus, but who apparently wished to do so and remain comfortable and well off at the same time, and to the story of the disciple who wished to bury his father first, but to whom was said, "Let the dead bury their dead," the West has paid little or no attention, whilst the East has taken it to himself.

The fact that Jesus sat down and ate with publicans and sinners is in the spirit of the East; the West prefers ever the company of the just. The West is glad to have the action of Jesus explained in the following verse: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

"Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses." Alas, all Western weal believes that it is founded on gold. If any good work is to hand, the first thing is to raise a fund.

"When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak . . .:" this has always been most helpful to persecuted nonconformists and heretics.

"I came not to send peace, but a sword" is overlooked in the West. The West thinks that Christ proclaimed peace. And the peace that was before the great war was thought to be a wonderful fruit of Christianity — the peace of mutual jealousy and fear, the great commercial peace of the twentieth century, that Kipling calls the "Peace of Dives";

> The whole wide earth is laid
> In the peace that I have made;
> And behold, I wait on thee to trouble it.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it:" the West emphasises this thought. Carlyle gave it great force in his gospel of work. "Forget your troubles," says the West; "throw yourself into work and lose yourself — then you'll soon find yourself." The East will not work in that way.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden" has been comfort to the West.

In the matter of healing on the Sabbath the Western is rather on the side of the Jews.

The question, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?" has not been acceptable to the West. The West would have preferred Jesus to be a model family man, not only loving mother and brothers and sisters, but having a wife and children about him. The Eastern Church takes its stand with the early Christians and the denial of earthly ties. Sometimes news is brought of father or mother or brethren to the wonderful Russian hermits such as Father Seraphim, but they coldly repel the tidings with Christ's words, "Whosoever doeth the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

Casting the wicked into the fire — this idea lingers in America, but it is dead in Russia and in England.

The confession of Peter, and the prophecy, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church," the Roman Church has necessarily taken to itself.

The Transfiguration on the mountain — the "possessed about the foot of the mountain — is taken as an Eastern understanding of life. The light of transfiguration is the halo about the head of the hermit; the possessed below

make the hurly-burly of the world whence the hermit made his escape. "The light of transfiguration," I heard Prince Trubetskoi say in a lecture at Moscow, "is the light of haloes, the light of Holy Russia, the light of friendship."

"Let us build three tabernacles" is, as I said, Western.

The West has believed Jesus in that He answered the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" by taking a little child and setting him in the midst of them.

The West has allowed its eyes to rest on the parable of the Talents, but the East has had more appreciation of "The first shall be last, and the last first."

The West has insisted on "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," but it has avoided the condemnation of the Pharisees; the Gospel of St. Matthew reveals itself as the gospel of the kingdom of heaven as opposed to "the world." But the West has sought to find "the world" holy. Western Christianity was started by the conquest of worldly armies, but Eastern Christianity was founded on the example of hermits, eunuchs, stoics, philosophers, fanatics. It had all the advantage of proximity to the place where Christianity started, all the advantage of the traditions of Greek and Roman philosophy. Despite all our study of Greek and of history and of philosophy at the schools, and despite the Russian's lack of study, yet the latter is nearer to the ancient spirit; but he has lived historically in direct relation to Byzantium, and has ever had before his eyes living examples of the way to live a Christian life.

"Many are called, but few are chosen" has had great influence in the West, but the power of the text is waning.

Protestantism is becoming more philanthropical, easy-going, and generous than it was in the days of persecution.

The idea of the Second Coming of Christ is a strange will-o'-the-wisp of light that cannot be tracked and is difficult to account for, breaking out ever and anon unexpectedly where you would think it had for ever disappeared. At present it is seen in many places, East and West. Originally it was a very powerful sentiment, but after two thousand years of waiting hope has died down, and it is seldom that whole societies sell up all their worldly goods and repair to the valley of Jehoshaphat to wait the great day.

The story of Mary pouring the precious ointment on Jesus's head rather than selling the ointment and giving the proceeds to the poor is the way of Mary rather than the way of Martha.

Here perhaps ends the Gospel of St. Matthew as far as definite sentences of teaching are concerned, and probably sufficient ideas have been taken out and compared for the purpose of this differentiation.

As regards the acts of the Gospel, there remains the consideration of the miracles. The healing of the sick, the lame, the blind, has become the example of the West, and what Christ did by miracle they do by science. The East, however, insists on the miraculous, and to-day in Russia thousands of miracles are performed annually at the sacred shrines. Whether these miracles are genuine or no is a moot point. Many certainly are no more than ecclesiastical contrivances for gaining popular support for ikons and shrines. Many are said to be the result of the faith of

those who ask the miracle. At Kief and Sarof and New Jerusalem many a blind man receives sight, many a cripple straightens herself out, many a sick man is restored to health. The Eastern Church lays stress on the miraculous; the miracle, however, is esoterically understood as mystery. The Russian has an extraordinary capacity for belief.

There remains the Crucifixion, of which I will say no more than that it is the greatest *podvig*, the crown of the life of Jesus. For the West it is the Resurrection that is emphasised. As I wrote in *With the Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem:* "For the Orthodox, He was dead; for the Protestant He is alive for evermore." So two churches combine to make one truth, and the hand-maidens of the Lord, Martha and Mary, are shown to be indeed two sisters, not only in kindred but in spirit.

THE END

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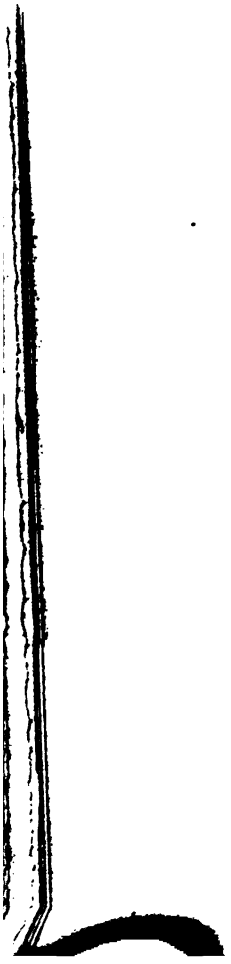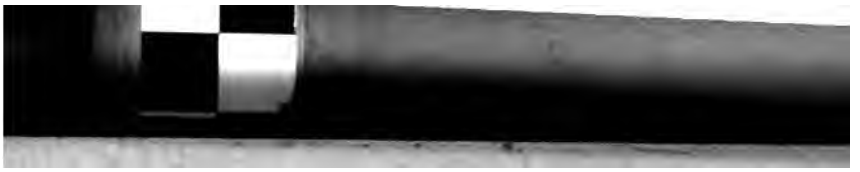
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